

Holidays begin next Wednesday

AMMAN (Petra) — Chief Islamic Justice Mohammad Mhailan Tuesday announced that Tuesday, June 2, was the first Thul Hijja and that consequently Thursday, June 11, will be the first of the 'Eid Al Adha feast. Sheikh Mhailan extended congratulations to His Majesty King Hussein, the Jordanian people and the Arab and Islamic nations. In observance of the feast, all ministries and government departments and public institutions will be closed as of Thursday, June 11, till Monday June 15, a communique issued by Prime Minister Sharif Zeid Ben Shaker said Tuesday. While the 'Eid holiday starts Thursday, the actual public holidays will begin Wednesday, which marks the Great Arab Revolt and Army Day. The country will be back to work on Tuesday, June 16.

Jordan Times

An independent Arab political daily published by the Jordan Press Foundation
جوردان تايمز يومية سياسية تصدر بالانجليزية عن المؤسسة الصحفية الاردنية، الرابطة

Velayati meets Lebanese leaders in Beirut

BEIRUT (AP) — Iranian Foreign Minister Ali Akbar Velayati said Tuesday he had agreed with Lebanese government leaders to support guerrillas fighting Israel in South Lebanon. Mr. Velayati also said the plight of two German hostages held by extremist groups in Lebanon was not a topic of discussion in an hour-long meeting he held with his Lebanese counterpart, Faris Bouze. But speculation was rife in Beirut that Mr. Velayati would make an effort to gain the release of the Germans in a meeting with Hizbollah security chief Abdul Hadi Hamadi, expected to be held in the Iranian embassy. Mr. Velayati met with Lebanese Prime Minister Rashid Solh after Mr. Bouze and later held a two-hour conference with Lebanon's senior-most Shiite religious and militia leaders. They included Sheikh Mohammad Hussein Fadlallah, spiritual guide of Hizbollah, Hizbollah's political leader Sheikh Hassan Nasrallah, Sheikh Mohammad Mehdi Shamseddin, head of the Shiite Supreme Council that runs the sect's day-to-day religious affairs, and Nabih Berri, leader of the Amal militia. No statement was issued after the closed-doors meeting.

Volume 17 Number 5020

AMMAN WEDNESDAY, JUNE 3, 1992, THU EL HIJJA 2, 1412

Price: Jordan 100 fils; Saudi Arabia 1.50 riyals; UAE 1.50 dirhams

King, Queen attend ABS graduation

AMMAN (Petra) — Their Majesties King Hussein and Queen Noor Tuesday attended the graduation ceremony of the fifth grade at the Amman Baccalaureate School (ABS). His Royal Highness Prince Hashem was among the 50 graduating students. Queen Noor distributed certificates to the students and awards to excellent students, of whom Prince Hashem was one. The graduation ceremony was attended by Chief Chamberlain Prince Raad Ben Zeid.

Decree clears way for accords

AMMAN (Petra) — A Royal Decree was issued Tuesday endorsing decision which approved Jordan signing international pacts issued by the United Nations, including an international agreement on combating racial segregation and an agreement on the nationality of married women. Another Royal Decree was issued approving the Jordanian currency issuance system. According to the decree, circulated Jordanian currency will remain acceptable till the Cabinet decides to withdraw it.

Tourism campaign for Germans planned

AMMAN (Petra) — The Cabinet met Tuesday under the chairmanship of Prime Minister Sharif Zeid Ben Shaker and decided to launch a promotion campaign aimed at attracting German tourists to Jordan. It also approved holding an annual gathering of Arab intellectuals and writers in Amman. The gathering will be held this year between Aug. 22-25 under the title "The Jordanian Novel and its Place on the Arab Map." The Cabinet also approved amendments to customs duty on air-conditioners and chassis imported for bus assembly plants. The decision, which was issued upon recommendations by the ministers of industry and trade, finance and supply, aim to encourage such industries in the Kingdom.

5 ambassadors recalled home

AMMAN (J.T.) — Five ambassadors have been recalled home, and are to be retired soon, according to informed sources. They are Ambassador to Yugoslavia Hani Tabara, Ambassador to Sudan Mohammad Alanch, Ambassador to France Awad Al Khalidi, Ambassador to Iraq Waleed Saad Al Bataineh and Ambassador to Yemen Fakri Abu Talab.

U.N.: \$526 million pledged for Africa

GENEVA (AP) — The United Nations said Tuesday it has received promises of \$526 million towards an appeal to prevent millions of people starving in southern Africa. Jan Eliasson, the United Nations humanitarian chief, said the offers of help to the drought-stricken region were "unusually generous." The U.N. had appealed for a total \$856 million to help 18 million people in 10 southern African nations ravaged by a drought that has no parallel in living memory. Mr. Eliasson told a press conference that the United States, the European Community, Japan and Scandinavia were the main donors. He said he was confident that more offers of help would come in over the next few weeks.

Bush said to get funds to oust Saddam

NEW YORK (R) — A U.S. House of Representatives committee has approved the spending of \$40 million in 1993 to help overthrow Iraqi President Saddam Hussein, more than double the current budget of \$15 million, the New York Times said on Tuesday. The paper, quoting administration and other government officials, said the increased aid was approved by the house Select Committee on Intelligence. If approved by Congress, the money would be used to strengthen current programme to groups and individuals inside Iraq, the newspaper said.

Assad accuses Israel of seeking war, but says Syria will not hit first

Compiled from agency dispatches

SYRIAN PRESIDENT Hafez Al Assad has accused Israel of seeking war with Syria in an effort to undermine the peace process, but said his country would not launch the first attack on Israel.

President Assad, in an interview with the British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC), said Syria would fight if attacked by the Israelis.

Mr. Assad's remarks came

against the background of rising tension between Syria and Israel and fears of a new Middle East war since the escalation of violence between Israeli and allied forces and Lebanese resistance fighters.

Syrian gunners based in Lebanon under an Arab League peace-keeping mandate opened up their anti-aircraft batteries at least three times in the past 10 days against Israeli warplanes raiding Lebanese resistance bases close to the Syrian border.

No hits were reported, but the incidents underlined the possibility of a Syrian-Israeli confrontation over Lebanon.

At least 30 people have been killed and dozens wounded in Israeli air raids and ground assaults in Lebanon since mid-May.

"Israel is the country which is seeking war," Mr. Assad said in the BBC interview. "It is committing aggression against Lebanon, carrying out raids against civilians, (and) killing women and old people using advanced weapons when it obtained mainly from the United States," the president said in remarks which were translated by the BBC.

"Syria opened the door for the current peace efforts which have been blocked by Israel," he said. "Therefore, Syria, which takes part in the peace efforts, did not plan at the same time to go to war, it is Israel which seeks war."

"If war is launched against Syria, she will defend itself," Assad said. "Defending Lebanese resistance against Israel, Mr. Assad pointed out that the Jewish state was occupying a border strip in southern Lebanon which it calls a 'security zone'."

"The population of any country whose land is occupied has a compulsion to fight against the occupier," said the Syrian president.

Israel argues that it is only retaliating for attacks mounted by Lebanese resistance groups, led by the pro-Israeli Hizbollah movement.

Mr. Assad said the Israeli government of Yitzhak Shamir was



King telephones 4 Arab leaders

HIS MAJESTY KING Hussein Tuesday telephoned Syrian President Hafez Al Assad, and exchanged views with him on current Arab issues and reviewed the latest international development. King Hussein reassured Mr. Assad on the health of Palestinian leader Yasser Arafat, who in Amman underwent Monday a successful surgery to remove a blood clot.

The King made similar telephone calls to Yemeni President Ali Abdullah Saleh, Tunisian President Zine Al Abidine Ben Ali and Libyan leader Muammar Qadhafi, the Jordan News Agency, Petra, said.

Shamir presses call for more settlements

OCCUPIED WEST BANK (R) — Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhak Shamir has told Jewish settlers that their numbers must increase to end forever the possibility of a Palestinian state.

"Even 120,000 is not enough, though thank God we reached this and it is a great force," he declared Monday.

"We need more, more, to prevent forever the establishment of this calamity called the State of Palestine. It will not rise, it will not be," shouted the Likud prime minister, who is seeking reelection in a June 23 national election.

"We must thrust forward ... the land of Israel must be settled by Jews from one end to the other," said the hardline prime minister.

Mr. Shamir was in Psagot, a settlement of 150 families perched over the Palestinian town of Al Birah, to receive honorary citizenship.

Latest polls show Mr. Shamir

Iran-backed rebels fight loyalist forces in Kabul

KABUL (Agencies) — Iranian-supported rebels clashed with forces loyal to the Islamic caretaker government Tuesday, wounding scores of people, witnesses said.

A full security alert was clamped on the capital, breaking nearly three weeks of relative calm.

Tanks and armoured vehicles that had all but disappeared rumbled again through the largely deserted streets, and many shops closed their shutters. Checkposts manned by dozens of armed guerrillas stopped and searched vehicles.

Bursts of machine-gun fire reverberated through parts of the city of 1.5 million.

Doctors at the Red Cross Hospital said as many as six people were killed in the fighting and 45 were wounded, most of them civilians hit by exploding shells and gunfire.

Other hospitals said they had received casualties but had no

'Libyan, British officials to meet'

CAIRO (AP) — Libyan and British officials next week will discuss Libya's crisis with the West over its refusal to surrender two bombing suspects, Egypt's foreign minister said Tuesday.

Minister Amr Musa did not say where the meeting will be and gave no exact date.

"Libyan and British representatives will meet next week under the aegis of the United Nations," Mr. Musa told reporters. "The meeting will be within the framework of efforts to resolve the Libyan-Western crisis."

The U.N. Security Council slapped air, arms and diplomatic sanctions on Libya April 15 for its refusal to hand over for trial in the United States or Britain two Libyans suspected in the 1988 bombing of Pan Am Flight 103 over Scotland.

Egypt has played an active role in efforts to resolve the impasse.

Usama Al Baz, President Hosni Mubarak's top political aide, returned Tuesday from Libya's capital Tripoli, where he met with Libyan leader Muammar Qadhafi.

Mr. Mubarak told local media representatives on Sunday that Cairo was involved in efforts to arrange a meeting between Libyan and European officials but gave no specifics.

The British have other business to discuss with Libyan representatives — Libya has admitted arming Irish Republican Army (IRA) guerrillas trying to drive Britain from Northern Ireland but says it stopped and is ready to tell what it knows about the IRA.

OIC meeting on Bosnia

Foreign Minister Musa also said a proposed meeting of Islamic foreign ministers on the Bosnia-Herzegovina crisis will be held in Turkey on June 17-18.

He said he received messages about the meeting from the Turkish government and from Hamid Al Ghabib, secretary-general of the sponsoring Organisation of Islamic Conference.



Palestinians slaughter sheep in front of the Palestine embassy in Amman Tuesday to celebrate the successful surgery that Yasser Arafat underwent Monday (Photo by Yusef Al 'Allan)

Arafat recovering well

By a Jordan Times Staff Reporter with agency dispatches

AMMAN — Palestinian leader Yasser Arafat is recovering well after undergoing a brain surgery and was removed from the intensive care unit (ICU) Tuesday, doctors said.

His Majesty King Hussein, who remained with Mr. Arafat during Monday's surgery at the King Hussein Medical Centre, called on the Palestinian leader Tuesday to inquire about his health.

The Jordan News Agency, Petra, said doctors at the centre reassured the King of Mr. Arafat's health and the King wished the chairman of the Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO) a speedy recovery.

Dr. Adel Shreideh, a leading

neurosurgeon who carried out the surgery, told Jordan Television that Mr. Arafat was "continuing to improve" and that he was moved from the ICU to a suite at the hospital Tuesday.

Mr. Arafat woke up after an uneventful night and moved about in the suite, the doctor said, adding that the president of the State of Palestine was expected to be discharged in the next few days.

Similar comments on Mr. Arafat's health were made by other doctors as well as his personal physician.

"He is doing remarkably well," said Dr. Yusef Qousous, head of the medical services centre.

Although doctors have said Mr. Arafat's condition was not life-threatening, the surgery underscored the precariousness

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King says he is reassured of Arafat's health

HIS MAJESTY King Hussein paid a visit to Yasser Arafat in hospital Tuesday evening and told reporters afterwards that the Palestinian leader was in normal condition.

"I spent some time tonight with President Arafat and am now reassured of his health conditions," the King said.

"He is now in normal conditions and is recuperating," the Jordan News Agency, Petra, quoted the King as saying.

It was the King's second visit to Mr. Arafat on Tuesday. The King remained with Mr. Arafat during the brain surgery the Palestinian leader underwent on Monday.

Computerised civil registration, new section for parties planned...

By Mariam M. Shabin with Petra dispatches

AMMAN — The Ministry of Interior will introduce a computerised civil registration system and will establish a new department for administering the affairs of political parties as part of its administrative reform programme, Minister of Interior Jawdat Shoul said Tuesday.

The two changes are part of comprehensive administrative reforms that Prime Minister Sharif Zeid Ben Shaker called for last month.

Every Jordanian citizen will receive a registration number that will be fed into a main computer at the Civil Status and Passport Department. The number will remain the main source of citizenship identification throughout an individual's lifetime, Mr. Shoul told a press

conference.

The Civil Status and Passport Department will begin registering citizens, including newborns, this summer and expects to complete the registration of all the Kingdom's citizens by the end of the year.

The move to introduce administrative reforms and changes are part of the programme of the current government, which has been charged with furthering democratic reforms in the Kingdom.

Mr. Shoul said the Civil Status and Passport Department had placed all the staff, including its director general, in one hall so that they can all be working face to face with and close to the public.

By this arrangement the citizens will not have to move from one place to another to have their papers completed, the minister said.

Mr. Shoul also said that the number of employees in the department had been increased so as to face any increase in the volume

of work, especially at certain peak periods of the year.

In a means to facilitate the issuance of passports, Mr. Shoul said, the department has started accepting applications for renewal of passports through the post offices. This, he said, will save citizens time and effort.

By adopting these measures, the minister said, the ministry hopes to enhance decentralisation and improve performance.

But, he noted, amendments to law and new legislation are still to be enacted to help the decentralisation process to become fully successful.

Referring to arrangements in the Amman area, the minister said that new offices to offer guidance to citizens had been set up to save time and effort for people, especially in matters related to work requiring close contact between the governor's office and the security departments.

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... but administrative reform has a long way ahead, experts say

By Nermeen Murad Jordan Times Staff Reporter

AMMAN — While Minister of Interior Jawdat Shoul announced plans for administrative reforms in his ministry Tuesday, debate was continuing among officials, experts and politicians over how real improvements can be effected and positive change induced into the bureaucracy without increasing unemployment in the country or taking revolutionary steps to upgrade civil service performance and salaries.

Mr. Shoul's announcement that his ministry had adopted concrete moves towards reducing bureaucracy is only one of many steps that this government intends to implement within the next month or two, government officials say.

Those officials maintain that a two-step plan has been approved whereby the citizens' interaction with government departments would be reduced to a minimum — in turn reducing complaints of queues and delays in those departments —

before Jordan's administrative system is overhauled.

Meetings between the prime minister and several ministers which have direct dealings with citizens — including the ministries of finance and public works — have already produced several plans of action by these ministries to reduce bureaucracy.

However, the Sharif Zeid gov-

ernment can be carried out if employment is still linked to the Civil Service Commission and its payment scales.

A senior official told the Jordan Times that attempts to recruit professionals from the private sector are hindered by the commission's regulations which offer very little pay and few job incentives.

"How can we claim to be carrying out reform in government when a minister cannot recruit a professional with a contract?" asked the official, who requested anonymity.

His doubts over the seriousness of these efforts and their applicability are shared by some other politicians who also see that task "is a national necessity" but a step that requires proper assessment of the side-effects most important of which is unemployment.

Only this week, former Prime Minister Tawfiq Ma'ruf told an audience in Ma'an that "applying the correct procedures for administrative reform would require halting employment by the public sector which in turn would increase the level of unemployment."

"We cannot introduce administrative reform without reducing bureaucracy (which is increased by additional employment), and applying the proper administrative

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Jordan explains stand on shrines to Morocco

By a Jordan Times Staff Reporter with agency dispatches

AMMAN — His Majesty King Hussein has sent a message to King Hassan II of Morocco explaining the Jordanian position on restoring the Al Aqsa Mosque and the Dome of the Rock in occupied Jerusalem, officials said Tuesday.

The officials said the message was carried by Royal Court Chief Khaled Al Karaki, who was accompanied to Morocco by Rafei Najem, deputy director of an Amman-based committee which has supervised the Dome of the Rock and Al Aqsa Mosque since 1952, and Anwar Al Khatib, a former mayor of Jerusalem.

Reuters news agency quoted Amman-based diplomats as saying that King Hassan, head of the Al Ouds Committee of the Arab League, was trying to mediate a "dispute" between Jordan and Saudi Arabia over repairs to the holy shrines. But a senior official said Dr. Karaki's mission was to explain to King Hassan the reasons why it was important for Jordan to handle the repairs since outside intervention could mean acquiescence to internationalisation of Jerusalem which Arabs oppose.

Jordan has rejected any attempt to bypass its historic role

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Delegates leave for Earth Summit

AMMAN (J.T.) — A Jordanian delegation led by Minister of Municipal and Rural Affairs and the Environment Abdul Razzak Tubeishat headed for Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, Tuesday to take part in the Earth Summit, a conference which will be attended by delegates from 160 nations to discuss means to protect the Earth's atmosphere.

The conference, due to open today (Wednesday), constitutes a turning point in international co-operation towards ensuring sustainable development and protecting the environment, Dr. Tubeishat said in a pre-departure statement.

Over 10,000 people are due to take part in the summit, with another 11,000 participating in a parallel meeting of development and environmental groups called the Global Forum, according to conference sources.

At least 100 world leaders will be among the participants in the main conference, which aims to ensure continued cooperation

(Continued on page 5)

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Iran blames foreigners, opponents for violent riots

TEHRAN (R) — Officials in Mashhad — scene of Iran's worst riots in a decade — are blaming foreigners, enemy agents and opponents of the Islamic revolution for the outbreak and faulting police for their failure to control the violence.

But a radical Tehran daily, Salam, has pointed the finger at government economic policies, and at official silence about earlier smaller disturbances in other towns.

In public debate about Saturday's Mashhad riot and who was to blame, Khorasan Governor Ali Jannati said in an interview published on Tuesday that 100 shops and government buildings were wrecked and a schoolboy shot dead.

He told the newspaper Jomhuri Eslami that interrogation of more than 300 people detained indicated "foreigners and agents of arrogance" were involved.

But Salam said that blaming the riot on opposition and foreign provocation masked the real cause.

It linked unrest with President Akbar Hashemi Rafsanjani's economic reforms. It said Iranian officials, who gloated over April riot riots in Los Angeles, owed the people an explanation of the unrest.

Residents in Mashhad said on Tuesday the city of nearly two million people in northeastern Iran had still not returned to normal. Many shops remained closed.

Many people stayed home, going out to buy food which had rocketed in price, with eggs, for example, costing double.

Mashhad's mayor, identified only as Sabarifar, told Jomhuri Eslami that the trouble started when several dozen people surrounded a municipal patrol which had gone to check building permits at a new construction site.

They burned two municipal pickup trucks and beat up one of the drivers.

Mr. Jannati said police apparently restored calm by arresting people who had burned the pickups and thrown rocks at fire trucks and police cars.

But rioters regrouped when pupils poured into the streets at the end of the school day and a boy was shot dead in the melee.

"Police displayed negligence in carrying out their duty to confront opportunist elements. This matter will be looked into," Jannati said.

Mr. Sabarifar said police blamed the boy's shooting on "monafegin" — hypocrites — who he said took part in the riot "in an organised way." When officials say "monafegin" they are usually referring to the Iraqi-backed Mujahedeen-e-Khalq, Iran's most important opposition group.

The rioters, holding aloft the boy's body and claiming he was killed when municipality workers destroyed an illegal building, went on a rampage, Mr. Sabarifar added.

Mr. Jannati said at dusk, tell, rioters "destroyed, burned or looted about 100 government buildings, banks and cooperative stores," Mr. Sabarifar said 28

municipality cars and seven buses were burned and several municipality offices were burned or wrecked.

The head of Iranian judiciary Ayatollah Mohammad Yazdi, on Monday vowed "swift and decisive" punishment of the rioters.

Iran's Islamic law prescribes the death penalty for anyone who uses arms to destroy public order.

The Mujahedeen-e-Khalq, in a statement sent from Baghdad to Reuters in Cyprus, said 20 of the people arrested were executed in secret and the government planned to execute many more "to create an atmosphere of terror and intimidation."

(It said the government had recalled a Revolutionary Guard division to Mashhad from the Afghan border.)

The Mashhad riot followed smaller ones in at least two other provincial capitals since April. It was the biggest urban violence since Mujahedeen and leftist groups fought security forces on streets in the early 1980s.

Salam wondered if the government's silence about previous clashes in Arak and Shiraz had contributed to the outbreak in Mashhad.

"The Los Angeles events made top news in Iranian media and most if not all the audience felt joy because the torch-bearer of the oed domesticationist world order was grappling with malignant tumours within," it said.

"But the people expect to be informed of events like those in Shiraz, Arak and Mashhad quickly and frankly."

The move entitles India to a seat alongside the Arabs and Israelis at multinational talks on reconstructing the post-war Middle East.

Shaking hands with Mr. Gupta, David Matzani, head of the Asia desk at the Israeli foreign ministry, said: "I am very excited today, as an old Asia hand, to see that in the middle of Tel Aviv, we have the flag of India officially waving, and the sign in both Hebrew and English saying 'Embassy of India'."

"It is something we have awaited for a very, very long time," Mr. Matzani said. Israel now had relations with every non-Muslim country from India eastward, except for Vietnam, Cambodia, Laos and North Korea.

Some countries with Muslim majorities have established ties, like Nigeria and Albania.

Tehran Radio said Mr. Naeq-Nouri, 49, ran unopposed and received 191 of 230 votes to head the Majlis for a year.

His election caps the steady rise of a centre-right alliance that has pushed radicals out of positions of power since the 1989 death of supreme leader Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini.

Mr. Naeq-Nouri, a former interior minister, replaces Mehdi Karrubi, the radical cleric who beat him in the vote for speaker in each of the past three years.

Mr. Karrubi and most of his colleagues failed to get reelected to the 270-seat Majlis in two-round elections in April and May.

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An Israeli policeman gives water to John Demjanjuk during a court hearing on the appeal against his conviction and death sentence as "Ivan the Terrible"

Defence demands acquittal at Demjanjuk trial in Israel

TEL AVIV (R) — A defence lawyer asked the Israeli supreme court on Tuesday to overturn John Demjanjuk's war crimes conviction because of new evidence another man was mass murderer "Ivan the Terrible."

"I hereby ask this honourable court to completely and absolutely acquit the appellant utterly, unequivocally and without hesitation," defence lawyer Yoram Sheftel said.

Demjanjuk, 72, was extradited in 1986 from the United States where he settled after the war and sentenced to hang in 1988.

The supreme court will hear prosecution summons starting on Wednesday before issuing a final ruling.

Sheftel asked the court to ignore any evidence suggesting Demjanjuk served at other Nazi camps in World War II since it failed to show he was "Ivan the Terrible," the gas chamber operator at Treblinka camp where 870,000 people died.

He said Demjanjuk was extradited and charged solely on suspicion of being "Ivan" of Treblinka and 80 newly uncovered depositions given by Treblinka guards years ago showed "Ivan" was another man, Ivan Marchenko, whose whereabouts are unknown.

At the trial five survivors of Treblinka testified Demjanjuk was "Ivan" but the defence says they suffered from senility, memory lapses and lack of first-hand encounters with the guard at

Treblinka where they were prisoners.

"The conclusion is that Ivan the Terrible is not the man who is sitting there," Sheftel said, pointing to Demjanjuk sitting in the dock surrounded by a dozen guards.

The real criminal was one Ivan Marchenko, whose description does not fit Demjanjuk, Sheftel said.

He cited 80 depositions identifying Marchenko as "Ivan the Terrible."

"You must completely and totally acquit him (Demjanjuk)," Sheftel told the five-judge panel. "We have proved without doubt, with the help of these 80 depositions, that my client is not Ivan the Terrible."

Ukrainian-born Demjanjuk insists he is a victim of mistaken identity. He says he spent most of World War II in German prisoner-of-war camps after being captured while serving in the Soviet army.

On Monday, the first day of final arguments, Demjanjuk was brought into court in a wheelchair, whimpering and groaning. His son John said Demjanjuk's back was hurt during a bumpy 70-kilometre ride by police van from his maximum security cell.

Demjanjuk at first refused to don headphones to hear the proceedings translated into Ukrainian. Midway through the five-hour session, he was given painkillers, his son said, and at the end

walked out unaided.

Sheftel's case is based on 37 Ukrainian guards and forced labourers at Treblinka who in 80 depositions said the camp's gas chamber operator was Marchenko.

The guards testified in war crimes trials in the Soviet Union in the 1940s through 1960s, and were executed. Israel woo access to the files after the Soviet Union broke up, and prosecutor Michael Shaked brought the material to Israel.

The latest find was Marchenko's KGB file containing testimony by five guards and five women labourers, including fellow gas chamber operator and roommate Nikolai Shalayev and Marchenko's girlfriend at Treblinka, Alexandra Kirba, the defence said.

Nine of the ten correctly picked Marchenko's photograph out of sets of three and identified him as the operator of the gas chambers, Sheftel said.

According to the testimony by the Ukrainian guards, Marchenko was one year older than Demjanjuk, was captured by the Germans a year earlier, and had dark hair and a scar on his cheek. Demjanjuk was blond in his youth and had no such scar.

At the trial, the prosecution submitted an ID card with Demjanjuk's name that said he was at the Trawniki training camp for Nazi guards, but had on documents linking him to Treblinka.

Holy Month of Ramadan, and distributing alms.

On June 11, they slaughter sheep to commemorate Prophet Abraham's readiness to offer his son to God and start the four-day feast of sacrifice known as 'Eid al Adha.

Other high-ranking officials had warned earlier against "warping in pilgrimage" and distributing political propaganda.

The warnings are largely directed to Iranians, whose insistence on political demonstrations in 1987 led to clashes with the Saudi police and the death of 402 mainly Iranian pilgrims.

The Iranians stayed away from Mecca for three years but returned in 1991.

Part of the arrangements were that the Iranians would confine their rallies to their camps. It worked last year, and at least one such Iranian rally this year reported by Tehran has not violated the arrangement.

This year about 120,000 Iranians, one of the largest national delegations, are expected to perform the Haj, and diplomats do not anticipate any major disturbance in light of the more moderate winds blowing from Tehran.

India opens embassy in Tel Aviv

TEL AVIV (AP) — In his previous diplomatic posting, at the United Nations in New York, Virendra Gupta was not even supposed to have official contacts with Israel. Now he is in Tel Aviv, setting up the Indian embassy.

"Our first objective is to build bridges with Israel at the government level... and at the people-to-people level, which I consider to be most important," said Mr. Gupta.

Beyond the neat symmetry of the world's largest democracy establishing diplomatic ties with one of the world's smallest, the newfound friendship between India and Israel is a milestone for the Jewish state.

The 1990s have seen a diplomatic blossoming for Israel. India, China, and more than 30 smaller countries have established or renewed ties.

They include the Soviet Union. That relationship lasted only a week before the Soviet Union dissolved, but almost all the newly independent republics have established diplomatic ties. Georgia was the latest, signing up on Monday.

The change of fortune is felt not just by officialdom but by ordinary Israelis, who are savouring cultural events long denied them. The Chinese circus is visiting Israel. The Red Army Orchestra will perform this week, with Israel Radio broadcasting the event live.

In some cases, it seems almost like a rush to make friends. The Indian embassy, in an office block near the Tel Aviv beach, opened its doors before it had all its forms and rubber stamps in place.

The opening ceremony included snacks catered by a popular Israeli restaurant. But an Israeli who turned up for a visa was turned away with apologies.

"In logistic terms we are somewhat disorganised. We are still awaiting some documents and books," said Mr. Gupta, who is charge d'affaires.

India is a popular vacation spot for Israelis. But to get visas, they had to send their passports to Indian consulates abroad.

"I hope that within the next two or three days we will be able to start issuing visas," Mr. Gupta said.

An ambassador will arrive in a few months to head the four-man embassy, he said.

India's change of heart was prompted by the ending of the cold war and the beginning of Arab-Israeli peace talks, Mr. Gupta said.

"We thought that the establishment of diplomatic relations with Israel would contribute to peace in the region and help us to contribute in any way we could to this process," he said.

The move entitles India to a seat alongside the Arabs and Israelis at multinational talks on reconstructing the post-war Middle East.

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Beyond the neat symmetry of the world's largest democracy establishing diplomatic ties with one of the world's smallest, the newfound friendship between India and Israel is a milestone for the Jewish state.

The 1990s have seen a diplomatic blossoming for Israel. India, China, and more than 30 smaller countries have established or renewed ties.

They include the Soviet Union. That relationship lasted only a week before the Soviet Union dissolved, but almost all the newly independent republics have established diplomatic ties. Georgia was the latest, signing up on Monday.

The change of fortune is felt not just by officialdom but by ordinary Israelis, who are savouring cultural events long denied them. The Chinese circus is visiting Israel. The Red Army Orchestra will perform this week, with Israel Radio broadcasting the event live.

In some cases, it seems almost like a rush to make friends. The Indian embassy, in an office block near the Tel Aviv beach, opened its doors before it had all its forms and rubber stamps in place.

The opening ceremony included snacks catered by a popular Israeli restaurant. But an Israeli who turned up for a visa was turned away with apologies.

"In logistic terms we are somewhat disorganised. We are still awaiting some documents and books," said Mr. Gupta, who is charge d'affaires.

India is a popular vacation spot for Israelis. But to get visas, they had to send their passports to Indian consulates abroad.

"I hope that within the next two or three days we will be able to start issuing visas," Mr. Gupta said.

An ambassador will arrive in a few months to head the four-man embassy, he said.

India's change of heart was prompted by the ending of the cold war and the beginning of Arab-Israeli peace talks, Mr. Gupta said.

"We thought that the establishment of diplomatic relations with Israel would contribute to peace in the region and help us to contribute in any way we could to this process," he said.

The move entitles India to a seat alongside the Arabs and Israelis at multinational talks on reconstructing the post-war Middle East.

Shaking hands with Mr. Gupta, David Matzani, head of the Asia desk at the Israeli foreign ministry, said: "I am very excited today, as an old Asia hand, to see that in the middle of Tel Aviv, we have the flag of India officially waving, and the sign in both Hebrew and English saying 'Embassy of India'."

"It is something we have awaited for a very, very long time," Mr. Matzani said. Israel now had relations with every non-Muslim country from India eastward, except for Vietnam, Cambodia, Laos and North Korea.

MIDDLE EAST NEWS IN BRIEF

Turkey said close to deal with Bonn

ANKARA (R) — A Turkish newspaper said on Tuesday the German government would seek parliamentary approval to lift an arms embargo imposed on Turkey over use of German weapons against Kurdish civilians. The Hurriyet daily said Bonn and Ankara, seeking a formula to allow resumption of arms shipments, were to exchange letters on the subject on Tuesday after last week's visit to Turkey by German Foreign Ministry State Secretary Dieter Kasprap. It said Bonn would submit the Turkish letter to the German parliament in an effort to get the embargo removed. Turkish and German diplomats confirmed that progress towards an agreement had been made.

First Egyptian M1A1 tank delayed

CAIRO (R) — Delivery of the first Egyptian-built Abrams M1A1 tank has been delayed from July to October because of late installation of parts of the assembly line, industry sources said Monday. The \$2 billion contract with Egypt, the first export sale of the U.S. M1A1 tank, is a prestigious symbol of the close military ties that have developed between Cairo and Washington over the past decade. Officials had said the tank, being assembled from kits under licence from General Dynamics Corp, would be ready by June, for delivery on the 40th anniversary of the 23rd of July Revolution which overthrew the monarchy.

U.N. chief pushes to end division of Cyprus

NICOSIA (R) — The United Nations, seeking to end the 28-year-old division of Cyprus, will invite leaders of its Greek-Cypriot and Turkish-Cypriot communities for talks in New York this month, a government spokesman said on Tuesday. He told reporters an invitation was expected by Wednesday from U.N. Secretary-General Boutros Ghali for leaders of the island's two communities to attend separate meetings. U.N. sources said they understood Dr. Ghali would meet President George Vassiliou and Turkish-Cypriot leader Rauf Denktaş separately on June 18. If the talks go well, he hopes to bring the two men together for the first time since a 1990 encounter at the U.N. ended in disarray.

Rio summit too costly

TUNIS (R) — Tunisian President Zine Al Abidine Ben Ali will not attend the Earth Summit in Rio de Janeiro because the trip would be too expensive, a presidency source said on Monday. "President Ben Ali, who is keenly interested in environmental problems, would have liked to attend the summit but the journey by special plane would cost too much, about \$400,000," a presidential aide told Reuters. The president would need a special plane for protocol reasons as head of state. The \$400,000 would include the plane and hotels for the president and his entourage. He will be represented at the summit by Environment Minister Salah Jebali who will propose that developing countries spend part of their debt repayments on projects in their countries to protect the environment.

Cypriot workers strike at British bases

NICOSIA (R) — About 300 Greek and Turkish Cypriot workers at British military bases in Cyprus began a 48-hour strike on Tuesday over plans to make many of them redundant. Trade union spokesman Charalambos Pitsilides said the warning strike at Akrotiri, Dhekelia and a communications station in the Troodos Mountains, involved those directly employed by the British-run Property Services Agency (International). Other Cypriot employees at the bases were working normally. Britain, which employs 2,500 Cypriots at its bases and offices on the island, plans to phase out the agency by October next year. About 180 base workers have been told they can transfer to the Ministry of Defence's new task force.

Ethiopians on hunger strike in Israel

TEL AVIV (R) — Hundreds of Ethiopian Jewish immigrants, were on a hunger strike in Israel Monday demanding better housing, Israel Television said. The immigrants, living in hotels and temporary absorption centres at the government's expense, demanded to be moved to permanent houses and not the mobile homes that were prepared for them. Last year about 14,000 Ethiopian Jews were brought to Israel in a dramatic airlift. There are now some 45,000 Ethiopians in Israel. Many have yet to learn Hebrew and become integrated in Israeli society.

Emir of Kuwait on Latin American tour

KUWAIT (R) — The emir of Kuwait flew to Mexico on Tuesday at the start of a Latin American tour before attending the Earth Summit in Brazil. An information ministry official said Sheikh Jaber Al Ahmad Al Sabah will also visit Venezuela, Honduras and Argentina before going to Rio de Janeiro. Kuwait, along with other oil-producing states in the Gulf, is concerned the summit could blame oil for global warming and ask producers to finance anti-pollution schemes. Tayseer Abdul Jaber, head of the Amman-based Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia (ESCWA), said Monday.

'Morocco, Polisario to hold indirect talks'

RABAT (AP) — Morocco and the Polisario Front will hold indirect negotiations aimed at salvaging a stalled U.N.-sponsored referendum on the independence of the disputed Western Sahara territory, a newspaper reported Monday. The daily Al Sharq Al Awsat, edited in Casablanca and published in London, said the talks would be held in either New York or Geneva beginning June 9. Citing unnamed diplomatic sources in New York, the newspaper said the talks would focus on the nature of relations between the two sides after the referendum. No other details were provided. The indirect negotiations were arranged last week by U.N. Secretary-General Boutros Ghali in meetings with Moroccan Foreign Minister Abdul Latif Filali and the Polisario, the newspaper said. The talks will be mediated by Sahab Zada Yacoub Khan, Dr. Ghali's representative, the newspaper said.

JORDAN TIMES DAILY GUIDE AND CALENDAR

JORDAN TELEVISION

Tel. 773111-19

PROGRAMME TWO

18:00 Le Monde est a vous
19:15 News in French
19:30 News in Hebrew
20:00 News in Arabic
20:30 Saved by the Bell
21:10 Documentary
22:00 News in English
22:30 Challenger

PRAYER TIMES

03:52 Fajr
05:25 (Sunrise) Dhuhr
12:33 Asr
16:14 Maghrib
21:15 Isha

CHURCHES

St. Mary of Nazareth Church Swallow, Tel. 810740
Assemblies of God Church, Tel. 62785
St. Joseph Church Tel. 62490
Church of the Annunciation Tel. 637440
De la Salle Church Tel. 61757
Terrace Church Tel. 622366
Church of the Annunciation Tel. 623541

Anglican Church Tel. 625383, Tel. 628543

Armenian Catholic Church Tel. 771331

Armenian Orthodox Church Tel. 775264

St. Ephraim Church Tel. 771751

Armenian International Church Tel. 685326

Evangelical Lutheran Church Tel. 811295

The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints Tel. 623824, 654922

Church of the Nazarene Tel. 675691

WEATHER

Bulletin supplied by the Department of Meteorology.

It will be fair and some clouds will appear at various altitudes. Winds will be northwesterly moderate. In Aqaba, winds will be northerly moderate and seas calm.

Min./Max. temp.

Amman 14 / 27

Aqaba 19 / 24

Deserts 12 / 31

Jordan Valley 16 / 33

Yesterday's high temperatures: Amman 26, Aqaba 32. Humidity readings: Amman 30 per cent, Aqaba 20 per cent.

USEFUL TELEPHONE NUMBERS

NIGHT DUTY

AMMAN:

Dr. Issam Al Asmar 890504

Dr. Adnan Zaghoul 898140

Yousef Samour 615448

Dr. Rima Abu Zeina 894295

Firas pharmacy 661912

Ferdous pharmacy 778336

Al Asma pharmacy 637055

Nairook pharmacy 623672

Al Salam pharmacy 636790

Yacoub pharmacy 644945

Shmeisani pharmacy 637660

AMMAN:

Dr. Ali Shargawi Mansi (—)

Al Shamsa pharmacy (275825)

ZARQA:

Dr. Tareq Hijawi (—)

Khalifeh pharmacy 925417

EMERGENCIES

Food Control Centre 637111

Civil Defence Department 661111

Civil Defence Immediate 661111

Rescue 630341

Civil Defence Emergency 199

Fire Brigade 891228

Blood Bank 77121

Tomato prices decrease due to inability to absorb surplus

AMMAN (J.T.) — The Jordanian market is unable to absorb the surplus of tomato produce this year and tomato prices have dropped to about 50 fils per kilo after reaching JD 1.5 one month ago.

A report broadcast by Jordan Television Monday shed light on this agricultural product and problems facing farmers and consumers in terms of prices.

The report said that the tomato produce in Jordan is exposed to many problems that consequently affect consumers when prices go up as was the case in the past few months when tomato crops were severely hit by frost.

On the other hand, farmers themselves are badly affected when the produce is offered in abundance in the local market, the report said. It added that in such cases, tomatoes are sold in the market for less than their cost.

A specialist told the television programme that each dunum of land produces between four and five tonnes of tomatoes. "This means that we have 150,000 tonnes of tomatoes offered in the market in a very short time," he added.

Farmers in the Jordan Valley are suffering from great losses as a result of the drop in tomato prices. In an interview with Jordan Television, farmers demanded the intervention of the concerned authorities.

One farmer told the programme that the price of a box of tomatoes is fixed by the concerned authorities at 500 fils, while each box cost him between 600 and 700 fils. "For each box, we lose a minimum of 300 fils," he said.

Another farmer called for coordination among farmers since marketing problems happen every year. He also blamed these losses on the lack of tomato paste factories.

In another development, Agriculture Minister Fayez Khasawneh Monday opened at the National Centre for Research and Technology Transfer a seminar on the production of tomato seedlings. Several specialists from the Ministry of Agriculture and owners of plant nurseries are taking part in the symposium.

The symposium aims to acquaint the participants with ways of combating the white fly and other epidemics which inflict tomato produce.

Post offices commence handling of compensation forms filled by expatriates

AMMAN (J.T.) — Post offices around the country Tuesday began handling forms filled by expatriates seeking compensation for their losses after being forced to leave their place of work in the Gulf countries during the Gulf crisis and the subsequent war.

Ministry of Labour's Secretary-General Saleh Al Tarawneh said that the Labour Ministry has taken the proper arrangements to carry out directives by the Jordanian government-appointed Higher Committee to deal with this question.

The forms to be filled by the expatriates claiming compensation for their losses are to be handed back to the Ministry of Labour to be channelled to the U.N. Committee on Compensation.

Those affected by the war were mainly expatriates returning from Kuwait and Iraq, ministry sources noted. They said that the Higher Committee dealing with compensations as ordered by the United Nations special Compensation Committee is chaired by Minister of Labour Abdul Karim Al Kabani. Mr. Tarawneh said

that the forms are being distributed to and filled by the expatriates in line with the U.N. committee's plans.

He praised existing cooperation between the Ministry of Labour on the one hand and the post office on the other, noting that the Ministry of Labour will receive the filled forms by June 15.

According to the Jordan News Agency, Petra, the Labour Ministry Monday distributed 75,000 forms to be filled by expatriates claiming compensation. Ministry officials distributed the forms to 30 post offices around the country, of which 10 are located in Amman, six in Irbid, four in Zarqa and the rest in other areas.

More than 300,000 expatriates have returned to Jordan and the occupied Arab territories in the wake of the Gulf crisis. Most of the expatriates lost their work and their livelihood.

According to Ministry of Labour sources, by the end of 1991 there were nearly 129,000 registered unemployed people in the country, many of whom were returnees from the Gulf.

Aqaba expects boom in business from local exports, possible lift of sanctions on Iraq

By Rana Sabbagh
Reuters

AQABA — Jordan's Red Sea port of Aqaba is modernising for an expected boom in business from local exports and the prospect that U.N. trade sanctions against Iraq will be lifted.

The Jordan's only sea outlet and Iraq's main lifeline, hopes new loading facilities will also lure transit trade from nearby states, Aqaba Ports Corporation Director General Duraid Mahasneh said in an interview.

"One day, sanctions will be lifted and we will have to deal with more ships and cargo," he said, sitting in his office overlooking a 22-berth bustling with renewed activity.

Goods sent to Iraq since a partial lifting of the U.N. embargo to allow imports of food, medicine and other humanitarian supplies pass through Aqaba.

Shipping sources expect Iraq to start huge imports of reconstruction materials and other non-food goods once the ban is lifted and frozen funds are released.

Mr. Mahasneh said four million dinars (\$5.8 million) will be spent this year to buy new general

cargo loading and unloading equipment to improve the port's efficiency.

Another 200,000 dinars (\$290,000) will be invested in 1992 to double the size of the port's storage area to handle up to 15,000 containers, instead of 7,500 now.

Officials say that before the crisis, 70 per cent of cargo handled by Aqaba went to Iraq, once Jordan's main trade partner. Now only food and medicine permitted by the trade ban is allowed to be shipped to Iraq.

"We are also aiming to get the advantage of getting more in-transit goods to Syria and Turkey from ships that do not want to go to the Suez Canal (to get to Mediterranean ports) since land transport here is very cheap," Mr. Mahasneh said.

Port sources said Syrian-bound cargo via Aqaba, especially rice imports from Thailand and other goods from the Far East, was increasing after Damascus began liberalising its economy late last year by giving the private sector a greater role.

A modern network of roads links Aqaba with Saudi Arabia,

Syria and Iraq. Up to 14,000 trucks operating in the Kingdom form one of Jordan's biggest sectors.

"Being the most advanced port on this stretch of the Red Sea (compared to the nearby Egyptian and Israeli ports), we should be prepared to grab whatever business passes through if anything develops in the region in terms of the peace process," Mr. Mahasneh said.

The Middle East peace talks, which began last October, have yet to achieve any progress but the fragile process continues.

Mr. Mahasneh, who has a postgraduate degree in ocean management from North Carolina's Duke University, said private sector companies were being encouraged to increase cargo turnover and handling efficiency through buying their own machinery and leasing berth services.

The port plans to build two new berths before 1995 to handle an expected increase in Jordan's exports of potash, fertilisers and other Dead Sea minerals, among the country's main foreign currency earners.

Mr. Mahasneh, like most shippers and economists, believes the state-run port could be much more profitable if it were managed on a commercial basis and its current undermanned rates and service fees were adjusted.

Aqaba charges 40 dinars (\$59) in handling fees per container, compared with 187 dinars (\$271) by Turkey's Mersin port for similar cargo.

"We are also having the oil berth ready for all possibilities, including exporting and importing oil," he said.

Iraq has held talks with the United Nations to try to agree on terms for exporting \$1.6 billion worth of oil. Proceeds would be channelled to Gulf war reparations and U.N. agencies operating in Iraq as well as the import of food and medicine.

The oil berth was built to help Iraq export crude oil during its 1980-1988 war with Iran, which crippled Iraqi ports.

It was modified last year to handle crude oil imports when Jordan was forced to buy Yemeni oil because its oil supplies from Iraq were cut off temporarily by the war.

Irbid area to receive 2,000 tonnes of cement per day

IRBID (Petra) — In view of the mounting demand on cement for construction purposes and in light of the short supply in the local markets, a decision has been taken to provide the Irbid region with at least 2,000 tonnes of this commodity on a daily basis, of which 700 tonnes will go to Irbid proper.

The decision was taken here at a meeting which grouped Irbid Governor Fayez Abbadi and representatives of the Jordan Cement Factories Company (JCFC) as well as local merchants and members of the Irbid Chamber of Commerce and Contractors from the Irbid region.

Commenting on the decision later, the governor said that with these amounts, the Irbid region will have all its need of cement for all building purposes, warning that the government was planning to take drastic action against profiteers and manipulators of cement prices.

Last month, JCFC board chairman Bassam Al Saket said that the company was "flooding the market with additional quantities of cement in order to prevent further manipulations of prices. He accused certain merchants, without naming them, of being responsible for the cement shortage crisis in the local markets. Dr. Saket said that speculations have caused the price of a tonne of Jordanian cement to reach JD 55, but the company was still selling at the normal rate of JD 39 a tonne. He also announced that the JCFC was pumping some 10,000 tonnes of cement a day in the Amman area in order to

thwart the evil intentions of the profiteers.

The meeting in Irbid followed close on the heels of a set of decisions and regulations issued Monday evening by the government-appointed Economic and Financial Committee chaired by Deputy Premier and Minister of Transport Ali Suheimat at the Prime Ministry attended by Dr. Saket and other officials.

The meeting was dedicated to discussing the supply of cement to the local markets and it was decided that up to 14,000 tonnes of cement will be marketed in Jordan on a daily basis, registering up to 50 per cent increase over the normal supply of cement to Jordanian markets. It was decided that priority in the distribution of cement should go to contractors, tile and brick factories and licensed merchants dealing in cement.

The government decided to apply more strict control on the sale of cement to merchants and distributors and to take appropriate measures to ensure the transportation of all cement to various parts of the country.

In his statement last month, Dr. Saket said that the supply of additional quantities of cement to the local market has regrettably curtailed cement exports.

Dr. Saket attributed the crisis to unorthodox means adopted by the merchants and the profiteers and also to the boom in construction business following the long, severe winter season in Jordan and the unusual rush by people to invest in real estate.

Housing Bank to reduce interest rate on loans in regards to certain cases

AMMAN (Petra) — The Housing Bank Tuesday announced a reduction of the rate of interest charged on loans for housing, provided that those loans do not exceed JD 10,000 and are offered to low-income groups.

Housing Bank Director General and Board Chairman Zuhair Khouri said that interest to be charged on loans to these groups would not exceed seven per cent and would cover the cost of life insurance taken by the beneficiaries. Normally, 8.5 per cent in interest is charged by the bank from the borrowers.

He said that the decision was taken in the implementation of directives by His Majesty King Hussein and in line with instructions by the bank's board of directors.

He told the Jordan News Agency, Petra, that the decision benefits all the beneficiaries from the Urban Development Department, the civil servants, members of the Jordanian Armed Forces, the Public Security Department and those groups with low incomes.

Mr. Khouri said that more than 10,000 people in Jordan are bound to benefit from this important decision.

He said that King Hussein's deep confidence in the Housing Bank and his appreciation of its work and operations served as an incentive for the bank's continued progress and development.

Industry, Trade Ministry to display spare parts for firms

AMMAN (J.T.) — The Ministry of Industry and Trade, in cooperation with Jordan's major mining and industrial firms, is making arrangements for an exhibition to display spare parts needed by these firms' machinery and equipment with the aim of encouraging investors to embark on manufacturing the spare parts locally.

A ministry statement said that firms, like the Jordan Phosphate Mines Company (JPMC), the Arab Potash Company (APC), the cement company, the Jordan Petroleum Refinery Company and the glass factory, are joining hands with the ministry to seek the manufacture of the spare parts in Jordan.

The ministry and the local firms will seek to produce these spare parts in Jordan to cut on imports and save hard currency and encourage investors to turn their attention to the needs of these major firms.

Ministry officials said that they hope that local investors will set up factories to make these spare parts, with finances coming from

the major firms which consume them.

The exhibition, which will last several days, aims to orient the potential investors on the needs of the country's major firms.

One of these major firms, the JPMC, announced Tuesday that it transported 1,299,759 tonnes of phosphate in the first five months of 1992 from the mines in the South to the Aqaba port for export by rail registering an increasingly nearly 140,000 tonnes over figures released for the same period of 1991.

Aqaba Railway Corporation Director General Mohamad Kreishan said that 16 locomotives are being employed along the rail network, transporting more than 10,200 tonnes of phosphate daily.

There are plans for maintenance and repair work on the line between Maan and Hassa to ensure continued and better transportation services. Mr. Kreishan said. He also said that the corporation plans to transport 3.5 million tonnes of phosphate during 1992.

Society asks kidney patients to seek treatment at home

AMMAN (J.T.) — The Jordan Nephrologists Society Tuesday issued an appeal to all kidney patients to refrain from going abroad for kidney treatment, noting that Jordan's hospitals have all the facilities for such treatment.

A society member was quoted by the Jordan News Agency, Petra, as saying that numerous kidney patients who had been abroad for such treatment came back in bad health conditions and in some cases, inaccurate reports about their health conditions and now suffer from new diseases.

The society member, who preferred to remain anonymous, said that kidney patients are nor-

mally treated with dialysis until they are offered a kidney by a donor. This is still far less dangerous to their health than travelling abroad and seeking uncertain treatment, especially in countries where "parts of the body are sold and bought on purely commercial basis."

The Nephrologist, in cooperation with the Health Ministry and Jordanian universities and the private sector, will do all it can to facilitate the treatment of kidney patients in the country, said the society member.

He said that the society is working on a plan for the establishment of a national centre for transplanting kidneys.

Income Tax Department releases collection figures

AMMAN (Petra) — The Income Tax Department collected JD 68,849,021 in the first five months of 1992, compared to JD 59,569,794 in the same period of 1991, according to department director Mansour Haddadin.

He said in a statement that the increase by 15.5 per cent was due to responses by taxpayers to the department's call for early payment to save them the fines which

are imposed on delays. As of this month, taxpayers who so far failed to fill out forms with details about their income in 1991 will now pay a one per cent fine on their accrued income for every month in delay, he noted.

To make matters easier for taxpayers living in the eastern parts of Amman, a new department branch was recently opened downtown.



The Jordanian Conference on Civil Engineering at the University of Jordan stresses contributions by civil engineers of the country.

Conference commends engineers despite scarcity of resources

By Maha Addasi
Special to the Jordan Times

AMMAN — With over 11,000 registered civil engineers, Jordan has the highest number of civil engineers in the Arab world countries, according to the president of the Association of Jordanian Engineers.

In an opening speech at the Jordanian Conference on Civil Engineering, which began Tuesday at the University of Jordan, Husni Abu Ghaida said that out of a total of 27,700 registered engineers in Jordan, 11,000 are civil engineers.

He said that with the scarcity of resources from private and public sectors in Jordan, engineers should be proud of what they have contributed in the area of civil engineering.

"The conference comes at a

time when construction in Jordan is witnessing a big jump, with the area of construction in the past year reaching 4.25 million square metres, estimated at JD 600 million," Mr. Abu Ghaida said, adding that he expected the area of construction to reach five million square metres, costing JD 750 million. "This is in addition to what is estimated at JD 400 million for projects expected to be established in the public sector," he said.

According to Khalil Haddadin, the president of the Association of Jordanian Contractors, the contracting work sector in Jordan accounts for ten per cent of the gross national product in Jordan, and it is responsible for employing 15 per cent of the labour force and constitutes 25 per cent of the bank credit facilities, in addition to its contribution in

supporting and activating industries and other services.

In a manifestation of its commitment to interaction with the society in Jordan, the University of Jordan has invited representatives of various industrial, scientific, cultural and medical sectors in the country to serve as members of the university's boards, said Fawaz Gharaibeh, the president of the University of Jordan. He said that with this measure, the university can have an interaction of ideas and views regarding the society's various needs.

The university directs trainees, who are about to graduate, towards studying society's problems and examining Jordan's industries, industrial production and services, Dr. Gharaibeh added. He said that with this policy, the students will be better informed

and in a better position to offer services to their society.

Referring to the objectives of the conference, Dr. Hassan Safarini, chairman of the Civil Engineering Department at the University of Jordan said that the participants are bound to benefit through an exchange of their expertise. Also the academics and the practising engineers will benefit from their own experiences and research work on construction and building.

The conference will include 79 working papers specifically on civil engineering, presented by participants from Jordan, Iraq, Syria, Egypt, Sudan, Libya, Algeria, Saudi Arabia, Yemen, the United Kingdom, the United States and Germany.

The conference, opened under the patronage of Dr. Gharaibeh will continue until June 4.

With new organisational shift, JEDCO hopes to promote exports, diversify commodities

By Cosima Hadidi
Special to the Jordan Times

AMMAN — "Made in Jordan" is a label recognised and in demand by consumers of a variety of products all over the world.

This is the ultimate goal of the Jordan Export Development and Commercial Centres Corporation (JEDCO), formerly the Jordanian Commercial Centres Corporation (JCCC), that had undergone a major organisational shift in April this year.

Dr. Rima Khalaf Hunaidy, director of the corporation, said that during the Gulf war and as a result of a comprehensive adjustment programme for its economy, Jordan realised that the promotion of exports and diversifying export commodities and markets was essential to sustaining a viable and healthy economic relationship with the rest of the world.

"Concentrating exports on a limited market, as was the case before the Gulf war, makes the economy and production in a number of sectors vulnerable to economic and/or political changes in those markets. To reduce this vulnerability,

Jordan needed to work seriously on expanding established markets and penetrating new non-traditional markets," she said.

To achieve this, new measures need to be introduced to the Jordanian export strategy. "The government decided that to promote these new measures, it would be most effective and efficient to restructure the already existing Commercial Centres Corporation and expand its objectives, responsibilities and mandates that until then had been limited to dealing with Arab countries only and not as a general export promoting agency," said Dr. Hunaidy.

The JEDCO strategy is directed towards two types of markets: first, the already-established markets of Arab countries.

"Exports to these markets were not as diversified as we would have liked them to be commodity-wise. We aim to increase the number of products and goods that are exported to those countries. At the same time, we also want to introduce and promote a number of products that the indus-

trial sector has started to produce within the past two years," Dr. Hunaidy said.

The second type of markets are the non-traditional, particularly the European and American markets. "We realise that that will require working on two fronts: intensifying market efforts in those markets and assisting the producers to assist them in modifying their products to make them more compatible with the tastes and preferences and more demanding requirements of those markets," said Dr. Hunaidy.

JEDCO has two departments that are in line with these two objectives. The first, the export market development project, offers technical assistance and partial financing to private sector firms undertaking marketing activities or product development activities. The second, export trade services, assists individual firms to export to U.S. markets in particular.

JEDCO is currently focusing on the garment and leather production sector in Jordan. "This sector was chosen for many reasons. Most importantly because this sector is labour-intensive. We believe

that when we assist producers of garments to improve the quality of production and marketing to new markets, we will not only increase exports, but are also contributing to mitigating the unemployment problem," said Dr. Hunaidy.

"We have started work on a project and are on the verge of signing a contract with a group of reputable and highly qualified firms working in garment and textile production and marketing to implement a comprehensive plan of assistance from the assembly line level to actual sales in foreign markets. This 12-month project will start in July this year."

JEDCO is also considering the engineering sector. "This is still in the early stages of assessing the capabilities and needs of this sector, which help us put together a development strategy for this sector and possibly lead to a project starting September this year," said Dr. Hunaidy.

JEDCO approaches selected firms for its projects, after visiting a big representative sample of producing firms to assess the needs of the sector and a strategy to develop it.

HOME NEWS IN BRIEF

Premier extends work permits deadline

AMMAN (Petra) — Prime Minister Sharif Zeid Ben Shaker Tuesday issued instructions to the Ministry of Labour asking it to extend the deadline given to business owners to obtain work permits for foreign workers working for them. The instructions asked the ministry to extend the deadline to June 30 instead of June 6. A Ministry of Labour official announced Monday that his ministry will start an all-out campaign in search of illegal foreign workers. The official said business owners who violate the labour law will be referred to the concerned courts for legal prosecution while illegal foreign workers will be deported from the country.

Yarmouk to cooperate with Russian Institute

IRBID (J.T.) — A cooperation agreement was signed here Tuesday between Yarmouk University and the Institute of Communications in Petersburg, Russia. The agreement provides for the training of 40 students from Yarmouk University's Al Hijawi College for Applied Engineering at the Russian institute over a six-month period and sending several members of the college's teaching staff to the institute to conduct research. Yarmouk University President Ali Mahafza has met with the delegation member and briefed them on the establishment and development of the university.

Iran to hold industrial fair

AMMAN (Petra) — An Iranian industrial fair will be opened in Amman June 22. The week-long exhibition, which is held in implementation of an agreement signed between Jordan and Iran, will display various samples of Iranian industries.

WHAT'S GOING ON

EXHIBITIONS

- ★ Exhibition of paintings by five Malaysian artists at the National Gallery of Fine Arts, Jabal Lwadih.
- ★ Exhibition of paintings by Ali Taha and Rafiq Nasiri at Abdel Hameed Shoman Foundation Gallery — (10 a.m. - 5 p.m.).
- ★ Plastic art exhibition by 40 Jordanian artists entitled "An Artist and a Painting" at Baladna Art Gallery, Gardens Street.
- ★ Exhibition of handicrafts, gifts, leather products, scents, food and sweets at the Amman Fair Hotel.

CONCERT

- ★ Concert by Amman Players' Orchestra at the British Council — 8 p.m.

Jordan Times

An independent Arab political daily published in English by the Jordan Press Foundation. Established 1975.

Chairman of the Board of Directors:
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Director General:
MOHAMMAD AMAD

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Editorial and advertising offices:
Jordan Press Foundation,
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The Jordan Times is published daily except Fridays. Subscription and advertising rates are available from the Jordan Times advertising department.

Choice is theirs

MONDAY WAS the third time running in less than two weeks that Syrian anti-aircraft batteries fired harmlessly on Israeli warplanes penetrating deep into Lebanon and coming ever closer to Syria's airspace. Clearly Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhak Shamir's government is pushing Syrian patience to the limit in a bid to engage Damascus in a pre-election military showdown that may gain the Likud Party some critical votes in the June 23 general elections.

So far the Syrian government has refused to take the Israeli bait and has instead acted with care to frustrate Shamir's electioneering and otherwise dangerous tactics. But while accusing Israel in an interview aired Tuesday of trying to push the Middle East into war to undermine the U.S. brokered peace process Syrian President Hafez Al Assad still confirmed in the wake of increasing Israeli incursions into Lebanon that his country will not be the first to launch an attack against the Jewish state. This declaration in itself marks a dramatic and significant departure from the previous Syrian posture that aspired to strategic parity with Israel in order to maintain the option of attacking first if necessary.

Obviously Damascus knows that any military confrontation between Israel and any of the Arab countries would not only work to the advantage of the Likudniks by heating up the passions of the Israeli electorate but also finish once and for all the peace process.

Syria's calculated move not to overreact to Israeli warplanes flying over Lebanon, in particular the Bekaa Valley, therefore needs to be understood by all the parties concerned, especially at this critical juncture in the region's history. Arab strategists must make greater effort to outsmart the forces of extremism within and outside Israel in order to preempt Israeli intentions and give peace a real chance.

This is a time for sanity and reasonableness on both sides of the Arab-Israeli fence and not for launching actions and reactions or engaging in self-defeating tactics. Otherwise, the peoples of the Middle East would be playing into the hands of the forces that abhor the prospects of achieving peace and stability in the region. Not that the Arab side has a vested interest in either of the two major Israeli political parties or their leadership winning the election. Maybe the Arabs do. But in the final analysis, it is the Israeli people who must decide which way they want to turn in the quest for peace. If they opt for the right choice, they will find the Arabs ready, able and willing. If, on the other hand, they forsake peace and choose confrontation, they will also find the Arabs with no option but to defend themselves even though the odds do not seem to be in their favour at the present. The choice is Israel's.

ARABIC PRESS COMMENTARIES

SAWT AL SHEAB daily commented on a planned meeting later this week by the foreign ministers of Jordan, Syria, Lebanon and Palestine in order to review the outcome of the five sessions in the peace negotiations with Israel. The coming meeting will be held at a time when the region is facing a dangerous situation brought about by Israel's escalation of tension through its repeated aggression on Lebanon and its continued repression of the Palestinian people inside the occupied Arab lands, said the paper. The escalation of aggression coincides with threatening statements by Zionist leaders, like Mr. Shamir and Mr. Sharon, in which they reaffirmed their government's determination to hold on to all parts of the occupied Arab lands regardless of the peace talks with the Arabs and in total defiance of the U.N. Security Council resolutions and the requirements of peace and security, in compliance with the will of the world community, said the daily. It said that there is no doubt that the foreign ministers of the four countries directly involved in this peace process are concerned over this particular situation and are keen on coordinating their countries' efforts and stands with regard to the approach that should be adopted to deal with the situation. Jordan, for its part, has constantly called for a consensus among the Arab parties, on all matters, in dealing with Israel at the negotiating table and has always called for solidarity among Arab states at large in the face of Israel's intransigence, the paper added. It said that Amman's hosting of the coming meeting is a fresh reaffirmation of the Jordanian position and a new drive by Jordan to achieve the highest level of coordination among the concerned parties at the coming peace sessions.

A COLUMNIST in Al Ra'i daily focused attention on Iran's continued occupation of the Abu Mousa Island, owned by the United Arab Emirates. Under the shah, these islands were occupied by Iranian troops; under the present regime in Tehran, the completion of this occupation occurred recently, when Iran sent out troops to drive out the Arab population from the island, said Fahd Al Fanek. He said that the Arab regimes in the Gulf are saying nothing about this in their media and are acting like the ostrich, concealing its head in the sand and pretending to hear and see nothing. The writer said that the occupation of the island has proved to the world that the Gulf region is facing danger and that the allied forces of the Gulf states are unable to defend the Arab lands in their region. Equally unable to help are countries like Syria and Egypt, which aligned behind the U.S. in the war against Iraq and are not willing to do anything about the situation. The writer said that those countries, together with the United States, rallied against Iraq and offered billions of dollars to kill Iraq, but they are now facing a new common enemy which they can not deal with in the absence of the Iraqi power.

The gift of the Arabs to the world

By Thomas J. Fitzpatrick

I have written four articles for the Jordan Times this past year. In them I, as a foreigner, struggled with some basic questions that are a challenge for the Arab World, as I see it. Several of those challenges are the need for dialogue between Christians and Muslims and the need for dialogue between the Arab World and the contemporary world of science and technology.

Out of reflection about these issues and after many discussions at the Jesuit Centre in Amman, I think I have gone deeper in my considerations and seen that what would be most helpful in the Arab World is a profound reassessment of the Arab identity. This is a challenge for all Arabs — Christians and Muslims alike — and it touches the world of science and technology.

First of all, there has been a great recent distraction for the Arabs in developing their identity. For the past seventy years, or so, the Arabs in this part of the world have been almost consumed with the issue of the Arab-Israeli conflict. This is understandable because of the extent of the human suffering for the Arabs that this conflict has caused and the commendable fight for justice and human rights in which the Arabs have been engaged. But the issue has been so all absorbing that it almost defines the identity of the Arabs at this time.

To put it a bit naively, in the light of this conflict, to ask the question who are the Arabs, the answer is: Arabs are those who are in conflict with Israel. This conflict has not allowed the deeper issues of identity to be more in consciousness. The Arab-Israeli conflict — with all the necessity to be engaged in it — has been a distraction from the deeper and longer term realities for the Arabs.

What are the deeper realities of Arab identity? One way of answering this is to ask another question: What do the Arabs want to offer the world? What is the gift that the Arabs at this time in the history of the world want to give to the world? To answer this question would demand a deep sense of the Arab character and an understanding of the needs of the contemporary world.

As evidenced in my previous articles in the Jordan Times, I have been concerned about how easy it seems for the Arab World to take on contemporary science and technology without reflecting what this means for the overall culture of the Arabs. The Arabs are taking on the science and technology from other parts of the world and want to be free of any philosophy underlying these scientific superficialities. But, in rejecting the philosophy of science which the West has struggled in pain over the last 500 years to formulate for itself, the Arab World has no scientific philosophy of its own. So, taking on the

scientific advances of others without an integrating philosophy of their own makes the Arabs feel inferior. They take on the success of others and that is that. They feel they have no mission of their own in the world. They feel themselves simply as inferior receivers.

I think it best for the Arabs — for their own health of mind — simply to accept that they will not for the foreseeable future be offering the world great breakthroughs in scientific theory and investigation (maybe sometime this will happen). This is not where the Arab identity will be developed in the coming years. The hope of what the Arabs have to offer is a science and technology which is integrated into the community and is relational.

What does that mean? The gift of the Arab World is the gift of human relations. In the United States an image which is very expressive of a myth underlying the culture is the Marlboro Man — that rugged cowboy who appears in advertising for Marlboro cigarettes. The cowboy is a symbol of individualism in the United States: the solitary figure who roams the ranges; the strong and courageous individual who is ready to face any danger. The image of the rugged cowboy has been a very successful image in selling Marlboro cigarettes (to Americans and those who want to be like Americans) because it touches deeply the myth structuring life in the United States. This is not the image indicating the identity of the Arab people. A

root image for the Arabs is the bedouin tent with no walls, housing a group of family members in various activities. This root image of the Arabs sells many iftar (breakfasts) in time of Ramadan when the fancy ballrooms of many of the expensive, modern, technologically efficient hotels in Amman are decorated with bedouin tents.

The difference in these two images points to vastly different myths which are expressive of these respective peoples. In the West, individualism is a very strong force according to which society is structured and operates. In the Arab World family units and relationships are at the centre of human life and are the forces out of which life is lived. In the West "individuals" in creative isolation are usually responsible for great advances in science; some Arabs now may be engaged in such work and many in the future may contribute to such scientific work in a very creative way. But it would be the gift of the Arabs to the present world to integrate who they are as Arabs — for whom human relations are essential — with this scientific and technological world. The world needs this!

I have used science as an example of the challenge to the Arabs to express their own identity in the contemporary world. There is the challenge to the Arabs to express and develop their identity in every area of human life: economics, politics, education — to

mention a few. The struggle with the Arab identity touches every sphere of life. What I am suggesting here is a massive challenge for the Arab World. There is a feeling of defeatism among Arabs. This comes from a domination for some time of forces from outside the Arab World. But these forces have not been able to eliminate the deeper identity of the Arabs — they live this identity every day. It is this deeper identity which, if the Arabs are to offer something to the world, is precious and needed. Let the Arabs not feel inferior because of the great things other peoples are doing, but let the Arabs realise that they have some profound gift to offer the world and let them live by that.

It is painful to see the conflicts amongst the Arabs themselves. Especially painful for me is the conflict between Christians and Muslims. The recognition of the profound identity of the Arabs as a gift to the world is a suggestion not for just Christians or just Muslims but for all Arabs. The word "Arab" is not identified with any one religious group. There is a culture, an identity which all Arabs share. The image of the bedouin tent with its gathering of people expresses the root myth of all Arabs. If all Arabs could work together on development of their root identity maybe that could be a profound and enriching means of communication between Christians and Muslims.

I am a westerner and have

become tired of western analyses of the Arab World. I have come to the point where I believe that analyses of the Arab World, which are done by anyone educated in the western world, even Arabs, will inevitably be very negative, even devastatingly negative. Often, the forcefulness of these is that they are right — if you are content with the viewpoint they are offering. To be sure, there is much to be done in the Arab World in every field, but if it is not done in conjunction with the deeper realities and identity of Arab life it will merely be another force in depressing the Arabs and pointing out how inferior they are: and it will not work.

Finally, I would like to offer something on my own spirituality which has been an influence on my coming to the position proposed in this article. I am a priest in the Catholic (Latin) church and a member of a religious order, the Jesuits. For us, Jesuits, in our prayer and reflection there is a personal question which is very important, and that is: What do I want? Implied here is that we are created by God and amongst our gifts as his human creatures is the gift to make decisions. In the presence of God and believing that God is with me I ask: What do I want? I have thought much about this question in thinking about the identity of the Arabs: What do you want? What do you have and want to give? What do you want to give to the world?

Iraqi Greens want to clean up Middle East

By Peter Smerdon
Reuters

BAGHDAD — A "Green" party is set to enter Iraqi politics led by a pistol-packing ex-communist. The Greens say the main threat to the environment is posed by chemical, biological and nuclear weapons in other Middle Eastern states.

"The formation of this party is our national duty," said party leader Mudhir Arif, with pistol discreetly tucked into his belt beneath his jacket.

"We realise we will face difficulties in our work but will try to solve these problems in the legal framework."

Asked to describe President Saddam Hussein's stand on the environment, Mr. Arif, a magazine editor, replied: "We are not concerned with that."

The Greens say they are ready to apply for registration as the sole official alternative to Saddam Hussein's ruling Baath Party and are confident of approval because the Iraqi president promised political, economic and media reforms last year.

Saddam Hussein need fear no threat from the Greens.

"The Middle East is an area of conflict with foreign troops, and arms including nuclear, biological and chemical weapons in Israel, Iran and Turkey," said Green activist Behnam Abu Al Souf. "All these pose a threat to the environment."

He said the party would also campaign on anti-pollution and other environment issues.

Iraq's formidable weapons arsenal, including vast stocks of chemical weapons, now being dis-

manted by the United Nations under the terms of last year's Gulf war ceasefire did not appear to be an issue.

Mr. Arif, editor of Rafidain magazine, owned by Saddam Hussein's son Uday, sidestepped questions about Iraqi government attitudes to the environment.

Told that Saddam Hussein was seen by much of the West as an environmental menace, who ordered a covert nuclear arms programme and the torching of Kuwaiti oilwells, party Vice-Chairman Hekmat Daraji said such charges were unproven.

"If government policy runs contrary to the tenets of the party we will defend our principles," said the lawyer, insisting that the U.S.-led allies who drove Iraqi troops out of Kuwait set fire to the oilwells and that Iraq's nuclear programme was for peaceful purposes.

"At the initial stage we will campaign for the repair of damage to Iraq from the U.S. attack (Gulf war)," said Abu Al Souf, a retired archaeologist and the party secretary.

In what they said was their first encounter with a foreign journalist, the Greens stressed their independence.

"We are an independent party, not collaborators with the government," Mr. Daraji said. "At any stage we will express our opinion and if necessary move public against the government."

Iraq's dependence on polluting fossil fuels — its oil reserves are the second largest in the world but are currently bottled up by U.N. sanctions — left them unruffled.

U.S. talks curbs, but pushes sales on Mideast arms

By Carlo Giacomo
Reuters

WASHINGTON — Although it said the Gulf war created a vital chance to limit Middle East arms sales, the United States has since become the region's top weapons supplier and undermined its own support for curbs.

U.S. officials and Western diplomats privately pin much of the blame on China for the failure of U.S.-initiated talks among the five largest arms-exporting nations to place meaningful controls on conventional weapons deals.

But experts say the talks, which had their latest round of negotiations in Washington last week and have made only incremental progress, reflect a lack of political will among all five countries involved — especially the United States, but also Britain, France, Russia and China.

They say they can find no prospective arms deal that was thwarted or reversed in the year since President George Bush, buoyed by a Gulf war victory that has now lost its lustre, launched his Middle East arms control initiative.

The former Soviet Union used to be the top arms supplier to the region, with Iraq its leading client. But all that has been changed by post-Gulf war efforts by the United Nations to dismantle Baghdad's arsenal and political and economic change in the defunct com-

munist empire.

The United States, which the non-profit Arms Control Association (ACA) says approved more than \$21 billion in arms sales to the Middle East in the past 20 months — including \$8.5 billion since Mr. Bush launched his initiative — has become the region's leading supplier.

Saudi Arabia got \$14.8 billion of that \$21 billion and would receive another \$4 billion to \$5 billion if a proposed sale of F-15 aircraft goes through, ACA's Lee Feinstein said.

"Although it said the Gulf war created a vital chance to limit Middle East arms sales, the United States has since become the region's top weapons suppliers and undermined its own support for curbs."

Moreover, classified U.S. intelligence data shows that in 1991 the United States delivered \$4.4 billion worth of

arms Britain. \$3.5 billion the former Soviet Union, \$2.5 billion France, \$1.5 billion and China \$300 million.

All of the major suppliers face domestic pressures to continue a vigorous export trade. With the cold war over, the United States, Britain, France and Russia are reducing the size of their own militaries; so foreign sales help retain arms-manufacturing jobs and markets.

France is said to be particularly dependent on exports, with over half its arms sold abroad.

For Russia, struggling to make the transition from a communist economy to the free-market system, the sales provide needed hard currency. That is also true of China, which experts say uses export sales to support its army and line the pockets of the political elite.

Before and during the two days of arms talks in Washington last week, U.S. and diplomatic sources complained privately that China, in particular, was being difficult.

A key goal of the talks has been pre-notification of conventional weapons transfers, something Beijing has opposed and which the talks again failed to resolve.

But experts say except for ballistic missiles, China is a minor supplier to the Middle East and if the other four countries wanted to move on

pre-notification, they could implement this minimal step and begin controlling arms sales.

At a formal briefing for reporters after the Washington talks, a senior U.S. official, who spoke "on condition of anonymity, sidestepped direct criticism of China."

Natalie Golding of the British "American" Security Information Council said it appears the administration may have decided not to fault China publicly because Mr. Bush is expected to recommend this week extension of favourable trade benefits for Beijing.

Such criticism would only fuel congressional Democrats who want to deny such benefits because of China's record on arms proliferation, human rights and trade practices, she said.

Last week's talks resulted in interim guidelines concerning transfers of weapons of mass destruction and a transfer of data on 1991 sales by three of the five countries.

U.S. officials admit this progress is much more modest than they had initially envisioned, but they argue that at least a process for discussing arms limits is in place.

Although the negotiators agreed the next meeting will be held in Moscow, a date has not been set and arms experts fear it may not take place until next year — diluting an already flawed and fragile process.

Western Europe must get both feet firmly back on Atlantic ground

By Herbert Kremp

There is no mistaking the signs of continental drift in Atlantic alliance and European Community institutions. It is a phenomenon to be noted with the speechlessness that the forces of nature trigger.

Greater powers seem to be at work on a new world order none has yet thought of. Least of all the U.S. president. What are the forces that in a suspiciously parallel manner are prompting America and Russia to drift westwards and eastwards towards their respective centres of gravity?

In the think tank suites at NATO, officials would consider it a stroke of good luck if the North Atlantic pact were to last for a further five or six years "to stabilise the East."

The political region this term covers encompasses eastern central Europe up to the border with Russia and the Ukraine. Beyond this line movements

have been observed that are heading towards Asian great power status and cannot be accommodated in the North Atlantic Cooperation Council, to which almost all the former Soviet republics belong.

At all meetings held so far the countries on Russia's western flanks have all shown themselves to feel they are in a heightened security risk zone.

Where the United States is concerned, the drift away from Europe is exemplified by three factors, one of which is that as observers at NATO and in the sadly prejudiced European Community see it, the U.S. military commitment in Europe is increasingly coming to depend on domestic congressional priorities.

The parameters are no longer risk-oriented; they are budget-related. At the European Community the Los Angeles riots are felt to tell their own tale.

Viewed in this light, the United States is seen as facing urban unrest and the end of a historic

racial compromise. America's determination to regard the Yugoslav conflict as a strictly European problem is felt to be of equal importance. There was no mistaking it when the European Commission's Jacques Delors last met President Bush.

German foreign policy was based on the stability of the Soviet Union and the continued presence of the United States. That was why such great store was set by the CSCE, which was seen as part of an over-riding European security structure.

It was even seen as competing with the North Atlantic Pact, which increasingly came to see its role as a political one, that of paving the way for the expected peace order.

It was clear from the outset, however, that the United States saw NATO as its mainstay and the CSCE as at best an option.

Nationality conflicts then demonstrated the weakness of all large-scale organisations in which

the great powers are not equally represented — or at least one power rules the roost.

In the Gulf war the United Nations was overwhelmingly influenced by the United States. In Yugoslavia the U.N. and the CSCE seem toothless because the United States is keen not to commit itself.

America is anxiously but cold-bloodedly following the progress of nationality clashes in the former Soviet Union.

The central Eastern Europeans are keen to join the NATO fold but only allowed to take part in the mundane deliberations of the North Atlantic Cooperation Council.

There they are told that NATO's hands are tied where clashes of all kinds between nationalities — and the risks they entail — are concerned.

One of the key concepts of NATO's reformed doctrine is the claim that the pact's mere existence is a factor for peace and stability.

That may be true where NATO's traditional territory is concerned but it does not apply to the fighting that is going on in Eastern and South-Eastern Europe.

In the event of a military clash, such as a latterday Crimean War, Russia and the Ukraine would not be impressed by the existence of either NATO or the CSCE.

NATO might be able to offset this decline in its influence if only it were to decide to extend its territory to the borders of Russia. But that would require a unanimous decision, and none is forthcoming.

The European Community is completely helpless as it faces the conflicts that are spreading to Europe. It has no political authority and not even a self-defence capability, which is why the Serbian generals can play cat and mouse with it.

If Western Europe is to gain a firm footing once more amid this firm movement and destabilisation it

must quit its castle in the air and get both feet back on the ground.

For one it must direct its efforts to getting the U.S. Congress to review its inclination to disengage. The New Atlanticism proclaimed by Secretary of State James Baker in December 1989 is the basis and pre-requisite of all security.

Now that Russia has decided to replace the CIS forces with an army of its own which will control the largest nuclear arsenal and the tank output of a high-powered arms industry a corresponding American military presence and an intact alliance are indispensable.

The European Community must lend Eastern Central Europe economic assistance even though the presidential systems that are taking shape there may not be to everyone's liking.

These, then, are the urgent tasks that lie ahead for German foreign policy as well — Die Welt.

Computerisation planned

(Continued from page 1)

The Amman governor has been instructed to intensify his tours of various offices in the Amman region to ensure that due services are being offered to the public.

Referring to arrangements at the follow-up and inspection Department, Mr. Shoul said that directions had been placed at that department designed to help the public save time. These directions, he said, answer the citizens' enquiries and satisfy requests. The minister said that by these arrangements the ministry is hopeful that all procedures conducted by the follow-up and inspection Department can be completed in a matter of hours, provided all required papers had been submitted to the concerned officials.

Mr. Shoul said a sixth and new department is being opened in the Interior Ministry to help administer the registration and legalisation of political parties which are expected to be legalised this summer. About 60 political parties are expected to apply for registration, Mr. Shoul said.

"There can be no registration before the Lower House passes the law and political parties become legal," the minister said. "We have already received many inquiries and applications. Any party is free to approach us but the registration process can only begin after the law is passed."

Mr. Shoul said that the citizen's registration number would facilitate administrative work. "We hope that very soon citizens can renew their passports by mail, this will be one of the results of having number identifications for every citizen."

The process of registering the citizens is expected to take more than six months. It would also serve as a national census.

Most people who carry Jordanian passports are Jordanian citizens and, in addition to the passport, have a civil status identification card or a family registration book. There are, however, approximately 120,000 carriers of "temporary" Jordanian passports.

These temporary passport holders are mostly from the occupied West Bank and the Gaza Strip and were caught up in the administrative problems which resulted from the 1988 disengagement of legal and administrative ties between Jordan and the West Bank.

"These are humanitarian cases. If we want to follow the rules then there should be no temporary passports, but we cannot ignore the special circumstance that the Palestinians from the occupied territories find themselves in," said Mr. Shoul. He added that these 120,000 people would not be eligible for a citizen registration number since they are not citizens.

The head of the Civil Status and Passport Department, Nasouh Mohieddin, said the issuance of special passports for Jordanian businessmen and other frequent travellers was also among the new administrative changes being considered.

The crime rate in the country has not increased when compared to previous years, said Mr. Shoul, warding off accusations that the country is facing a crime wave. "There are no more crime this year than in the previous years; some crimes just get more publicity than others and therefore give a wrong impression," said the interior minister.

"To think that crime could be totally absent from any society is not realistic. Crimes occur in every society and Jordan is not an isolated island," he said. "Our job is to keep the crime rate as low as possible and we are doing everything we can."

Reforms have long way ahead

(Continued from page 1)

yardsticks," he said. "This in turn would require building government employment which means increased unemployment."

He argued that the number of applicants for jobs in the country goes up by 40,000 a year, which, he said, "is a large number that the Jordanian economy as it stands now, cannot absorb."

Minister of State for Prime Minister Affairs Ibrahim Izzedine, on the other hand, maintains that "if anything," certain sectors of government are underemployed.

Mr. Izzedine, who has played a principal role in the administrative reform plan, says that the ministries of education and health, being the largest employing agencies within the government structure, will face increasing pressures as the population of the country continues to place a strain on their services.

"Most of our departments are not overstuffed but employees are totally underpaid and ill-trained," Mr. Izzedine says.

"What we need is that kind of training that becomes part and parcel of any employee's work."

He argues that administrative reform, as envisioned by this government, would mean development of the staff and technology in public departments in a way that would reduce bureaucracy and increase efficiency and at the same time ensure increased employment in the private sector.

Coupled with that, Mr. Izzedine says, reform laws and regulations need to be introduced so that administrative reform would be institutionalized rather than remain at the mercy of one government or another.

But unemployment remains the more pressing issue for politicians in the country as the problem is often seen as a direct result of economic adjustment or linked to the large number of foreign workers in the country.

Mr. Izzedine says that the government is "aware of the results of restructuring on poverty and unemployment," and while these are not easy problems to tackle "it is to the credit of the government that we admit that there is real unemployment and not behavioural unemployment as previous governments had called it."

He maintains that the government had been working hard to expand the tasks of the Ministry of Labour to include employment as well as that it would become a ministry of labour and unemployment.

"The ministry would then have among its departments an identification department with a new emphasis on the work market and linking it with education of workers," he says.

But critics of this proposal maintain that while the Ministry of

Labour is directly concerned with only the employment of labourers — but not professionals — it would not be able to solve the unemployment problem of the country.

"We do not have unemployment among labourers," says Minister of Labour Abdul Karim Kabariti. "What we have is unemployment among professionals." In fact, it is this particular argument that some officials use to argue against expanding the Ministry of Labour.

"The problem of unemployment among professionals is the responsibility of the Civil Service Commission," argues one government official.

The official contends that unless employment of professionals is reformed to become an "open contest employment" the problem of unemployment among their ranks cannot be solved.

It is precisely this argument that the Ministry of Labour now uses to fight off demands to minimise the number of foreign workers in the country.

While Mr. Masri, whose government championed a campaign to reduce the number of Arab foreign labourers in the country, called for continuing this policy to fight off unemployment, serving labour officials maintain that foreign labour and unemployment in Jordan are not directly connected.

Mr. Masri, in his lecture in Ma'an, argued that while tens of thousands of Jordanians were without jobs, there still remain around 300,000 foreign workers in Jordan.

But officials now tell a different story of how this policy works and use it in explaining their present policy of giving permits to foreign workers.

Conceding that tremendous efforts were exerted to minimise the problem of foreign workers by the Masri government, critics say that these efforts only created another problem of foreigners staying in the country and working without official permits.

"I would rather give permits to the workers already in the country so I can tap their numbers and ensure that they are working in the proper sectors than have lists of names of workers who should be deported but are in actuality still in the country," a senior official says.

The official, however, says that the labour policy of this government on foreign workers may produce better results since it follows a policy of renewal rather than issuing permits for incoming workers which in the end only mean that their numbers would decrease as they leave the country of their own will.

A political angle to this particular argument is brought up by another official who says that while Jordan is working diligently to ensure that its own citizens are protected while working in other countries "we cannot apply double standards here."

Assad: Syria will not hit first

(Continued from page 1)

using the attacks to gain votes in the June 23 elections.

"In our view Israel has two aims: First to obstruct the peace process since it is really clear that the present Israeli government does not want peace," he said.

"It may find it an opportunity to obscure its attitude by talking... (about) the Hizbollah or terrorism and thus create a justification for war in the region," he said.

"Second, the Israeli government believes that by escalating military operations it will win more votes in the forthcoming Israeli elections."

The Syrian president said Israel should seek to attain peace with

the Arabs by abiding by United Nations Security Council resolutions and withdrawing from the occupied Arab territories.

Mr. Assad denied allegations of Syrian involvement in the 1988 bombing of Pan Am flight 103 over the Scottish town of Lockerbie in which 270 people died.

"Syria has said and continues to say that it has never stood with terrorism," said Mr. Assad, adding that Syria had discussed the allegations with U.S. officials.

"We urged them to present to us... any proof of anything that might implicate Syria. But they presented nothing simply because they do not have what they lost for."

Jordan explains stand to Morocco

(Continued from page 1)

in guarding and maintaining the holy sites in Jerusalem despite the Israeli occupation of the Holy City. A recent move by Saudi Arabia to donate \$10 million to a United Nations agency instead of the Amman committee to repair the Dome of the Rock and Al Aqsa mosques was seen as aimed at bypassing Jordan.

Shortly after the Saudi announcement of King Fahd's contribution of \$10 million, King Hussein, whose government remains responsible for the maintenance and upkeep of the holy shrines in the occupied Holy City, said he was donating \$8.24 million of his private funds to repair the seventh century mosque.

The King raised the money by selling a house in London, according to official sources. His contribution raised to \$10 million the amount available with the Amman committee for the repairs.

Jordan has said that while it welcomes Saudi or any other contribution towards repairing the shrines it insists that such funds be channelled through the Amman Committee.

Any involvement by an international organisation in Jerusalem "will open the door for the internationalisation of not only Islamic issues but the Holy City itself," Information Minister Mahmoud Sharif said last month. "We do not and will not accept

any internationalisation of Jerusalem or its Islamic holy sites," he added. "Nor do we accept any attempt to circumvent Jordan's role."

According to official figures, Jordan has spent JD 164 million on holy sites to Palestine since 1948, including the costs of periodic repairs and salaries of civil servants working for them.

A Jordanian popular fundraising committee formed last month to help restore Jerusalem's holy Muslim and Christian sites said it planned to raise at least \$20 million over the next three years from individuals and institutions.

Daoud Sulciman, spokesman for the group of affluent Jordanian and Palestinian businessmen, lawyers, bankers and politicians told Reuters on Tuesday a national campaign to collect "A dinar for Jerusalem" would start next week.

The target is to raise JD 9 million from at least three million Jordanians with the rest of the tax-deductible donations contributed by businessmen and institutions.

The Al Aqsa and Omar mosques along with ancient houses housing Muslim officials hadly need repair.

Tunisian President Zine Al Abidine Ben Ali expressed thanks on Tuesday to Saudi King Fahd who pledged to give \$10 million to repair the Dome of the Rock.

Delegation leaves for Earth Summit

(Continued from page 1)

among industrial and developing nations towards protecting common interests by providing safeguards for the world's atmosphere, Dr. Tubeishat said.

"It is indeed a historic occasion to see policymakers taking part in a practical meeting designed to find the appropriate means for preserving life on planet Earth and to ensure decent life for the future generations," the minister added.

The Earth Summit is expected to discuss elaborate strategies and measures to halt and reverse the effects of environmental degradation in the context of increased national and international efforts to promote sustainable and environmentally sound development in all countries.

The conference presents a unique opportunity for mankind to focus international attention on the fundamental interdependence between environmental issues and development, according to conference sources.

Dr. Tubeishat said that the conference would direct its attention to the protection of the atmosphere by combating climate change, depletion of the ozone layer, protection of the quality and supply of fresh water

resources, protection of the oceans and seas, protection and management of land resources, conservation of biological diversity, environmentally sound management of biotechnology, protection of human health conditions, combating desertification, fighting off the underlying causes of poverty and halting illegal inter-boundary transportation of dangerous and poisonous waste.

Jordan will adhere to a general consensus taken by the Arab ministers responsible for the environment in Cairo last September.

He said the Arab ministers declared their countries' commitment to work at individual as well as collective levels for achieving sustainable development and satisfying the needs of the present generation without prejudice to the rights of future generations.

Dr. Tubeishat is accompanied to the conference, which is scheduled to conclude on June 14, by a delegation of senior officials representing the ministries of water and irrigation and planning, the Meteorology Department, the Higher Council for Science and Technology, the Royal Scientific Society and the Royal Society for the Conservation of Nature.

Arafat is recovering well

(Continued from page 1)

of his being the sole leader of the PLO.

Defying doctors' orders to limit visitors to close aides, dozens of Jordanian and Palestinian officials and Arab and Asian diplomats converged on the King Hussein Medical Centre to check on Mr. Arafat. Hallways outside his room were packed with people and scores of bouquets of flowers.

Access to the military hospital compound is restricted to people with special passes. Hundreds of women, men and children gathered at the entrance, chanting "blood and soul we forsake for you, Abu Ammar."

Hundreds of others flocked to the PLO office in Amman to celebrate. A Palestinian slaughtered six sheep on the sidewalk outside the PLO office in a traditional expression of gratitude to God.

Sweets, chocolates and candy were handed out to the well-wishers as Farouk Kaddoumi, the PLO's political affairs chief, and Hani Al Hassan, Mr. Arafat's political adviser, shook hands with the crowds.

Mr. Kaddoumi who visited Mr. Arafat earlier in the day said the PLO chief "seemed to be in perfect shape."

"He got out of bed and walked a bit in the corridor," he said. Mr. Arafat, who at 62 has survived wars and assassination attempts and a Sahara plane crash in April, was rushed into surgery on Monday after a scan showed a blood clot caused by the impact of the desert crash.

The PLO leader has maintained a hectic pace of consultations between Arab heads of state on the Middle East peace process. He had been suffering from severe headaches and sleepless nights.

"He had been flying from Syria to Tunis to Yemen and over the past week the symptoms progressed and worsened," Dr. Qousous was quoted as saying by Reuters in reply to a question why Mr. Arafat had not sought treatment earlier.

Left untreated, the blood clot could have paralysed Mr. Arafat had he taken another plane trip, doctors said on Monday after he underwent a 90-minute operation.

Dr. Qousous said Mr. Arafat would be discharged by Thursday or Friday. He said the PLO chief was receiving few visitors and had not been given a telephone.

"At this stage we would prefer that he rest," he said.

Mr. Arafat's wife, 28-year-old Suha Tawil, had been expected to travel to Amman late on Monday to join him but failed to arrive. PLO officials said she had been delayed because of flight problems.

Mr. Arafat has no history of any major diseases, but has had

numerous scrapes with death.

In October 1985, he narrowly escaped when Israeli warplanes demolished PLO headquarters in an air raid on Tunis.

When Mr. Arafat was missing for 15 hours in the Libyan desert after his Antonov went down last April, Palestinians were stunned when it looked like he had finally run out of luck. Three crew members were killed in the crash, but Mr. Arafat suffered only bruises to his head and body.

Mr. Arafat has said France offered him medical treatment after he was hurt in the plane crash.

"After this plane crash in Libya in which I was nearly killed... Paris offered me treatment in France," he said in an interview published on Tuesday by the French daily Le Quotidien.

The crash came two months after the discreet admission of Palestinian leader George Habash for medical treatment in a Paris hospital caused an outcry and forced the resignation of three senior government officials

and the head of the French Red Cross.

The French foreign ministry had no immediate comment on Mr. Arafat's disclosure. France had offered to take part in the search for Mr. Arafat's plane after it crash-landed in the Libyan desert.

Mr. Arafat, who was treated in Libya after the crash, said he was grateful for France's offer.

"We shall never forget the French position on this occasion, that of President (Francois) Mitterrand, and that of my friends in the (French) opposition."

JORDAN WELFARE LOTTERY

Issue No. 10

Drawing of June 2, 1992

Winning Tickets

| | |
|---|--|
| Holder of ticket No. 06558 Wins JD 30,000 | Ten consolation prizes totalling JO 1,200 each wins JD 120 04559 04568 04658 07558 14558 06557 06548 06458 05558 96558 |
| Holder of ticket No. 50348 Wins JD 7,000 | Ten consolation prizes totalling JO 700 each wins JD 70 50349 50358 50448 51348 60348 50347 50338 50248 59348 40348 |
| Holder of ticket No. 74646 Wins JD 3,500 | Ten consolation prizes totalling JO 400 each wins JD 40 74647 74656 74746 75646 84646 74645 74636 74546 73646 64646 |
| Holder of ticket No. 95807 Wins JD 2,500 | Ten consolation prizes totalling JO 200 each wins JD 20 95808 95817 95907 96807 05807 95806 95897 95707 94807 85807 |
| Holder of ticket No. 63147 Wins JD 1,500 | Ten consolation prizes totalling JO 150 each wins JD 15 63148 63157 63247 64147 73147 63146 63137 63047 62147 53147 |
| Holder of ticket No. 55054 Wins JD 1,200 | Ten consolation prizes totalling JO 100 each wins JD 10 55055 55064 55154 56054 65054 55053 55044 55954 54054 45054 |
| Holder of ticket No. 73452 Wins JD 1,000 | Ten consolation prizes totalling JO 80 each wins JD 8 73453 73462 73552 74452 83452 73451 73442 73352 72452 63452 |
| Holder of ticket No. 66277 Wins JD 800 | Ten consolation prizes totalling JO 70 each wins JD 7 66278 66287 66377 67277 76277 66276 66267 66177 65277 56277 |


| | | |
|----------------|-------------------------|-----------------|
| Ticket numbers | 38412 42795 45431 26179 | win JD 200 each |
| Ticket numbers | 62591 90109 18064 | win JD 100 each |

TICKETS ENDING WITH

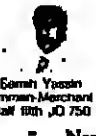
| | | | |
|----------------|----------------|-----------------------------|----------------|
| 9539 3330 3697 | Win JD 50 each | 4885 8101 1425 | Win JD 20 each |
| 5145 4828 4052 | Win JD 10 each | 9316 5920 | |
| 3011 1481 | Win JD 5 each | 812 152 744 285 | Win JD 5 each |
| 89 | Win JD 3 each | 10,000 ticket ending with 8 | Win JD 2 each |

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Tel: 667171
Fax: 667172
Subscription: \$10 per month
Advertising: \$50 per page
Circulation: 10,000
Printed in Jordan
By: [illegible]
Distributed by: [illegible]

Economy

JORDAN TIMES, WEDNESDAY, JUNE 3, 1992 7

Financial Markets

Jordan Times
In co-operation with
Cairo Amman Bank

U.S. Dollar in International Markets

| Currency | New York Close Date: 1/6/1992 | Tel Aviv Close Date: 2/6/1992 |
|------------------------|-------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| Sterling Pound | 1.8255 | 1.8183 |
| Deutsche Mark | 1.6060 | 1.6123 |
| Swiss Franc | 1.4558 | 1.4631 |
| French Franc | 5.3945 | 5.4346 |
| Japanese Yen | 127.03 | 127.48 |
| European Currency Unit | 1.2800 | 1.2770 |

European Currency Unit

| Currency | 1 UNIT | 3 UNITS | 6 UNITS | 12 UNITS |
|------------------------|--------|---------|---------|----------|
| U.S. Dollar | 3.93 | 4.00 | 4.12 | 4.62 |
| Sterling Pound | 9.93 | 10.00 | 9.93 | 9.68 |
| Deutsche Mark | 9.68 | 9.68 | 9.68 | 9.56 |
| Swiss Franc | 9.31 | 9.31 | 9.00 | 8.81 |
| French Franc | 9.87 | 9.87 | 9.81 | 9.75 |
| Japanese Yen | 4.75 | 4.65 | 4.62 | 4.58 |
| European Currency Unit | 10.09 | 10.18 | 10.12 | 10.06 |

Freeport Metals

| Commodity | 10/10/10z | 10/10/10z | 10/10/10z | 10/10/10z |
|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|
| Gold | 337.80 | 6.60 | Silver | 4.06 |

Other Currencies

| Currency | Unit | Unit |
|--------------------|--------|--------|
| U.S. Dollar | 0.6880 | 0.6880 |
| Sterling Pound | 1.2332 | 1.2332 |
| Deutsche Mark | 0.4210 | 0.4231 |
| Swiss Franc | 0.4638 | 0.4661 |
| French Franc | 0.1253 | 0.1259 |
| Japanese Yen | 0.5317 | 0.5384 |
| Dutch Guilder | 0.3737 | 0.3756 |
| Scandinavian Krona | 0.1169 | 0.1175 |
| Indian Rupee | 0.0559 | 0.0562 |
| Belgian Franc | 0.0204 | 0.0204 |

Other Currencies

| Currency | Unit | Unit |
|------------------|---------|---------|
| U.S. Dollar | 1.7690 | 1.7780 |
| U.S. Dollar | 0.0865 | 0.0865 |
| Small Arab | 0.1805 | 0.1809 |
| Kuwaiti Dinar | 0.1837 | 0.1846 |
| Qatari Rial | 0.1837 | 0.1846 |
| Cypriot Pound | 0.2100 | 0.2250 |
| Omani Rial | 1.7250 | 1.7450 |
| UAE Dirham | 0.1837 | 0.1846 |
| Greek Drachma | 0.35025 | 0.37025 |
| Ugandan Shilling | 1.4840 | 1.5040 |

CAR Indices for Amman Financial Market

| Index | 1.6.1992 | 1.5.1992 | Close |
|------------------|----------|----------|-------|
| All-Share | 141.35 | 141.26 | |
| Banking Sector | 104.36 | 104.50 | |
| Insurance Sector | 150.40 | 150.18 | |
| Industry Sector | 155.75 | 155.31 | |
| SerVICES Sector | 178.66 | 175.99 | |

LONDON EXCHANGE RATES

| Currency | 1.6.1992 | 1.5.1992 | Close |
|---------------------|-----------------|----------|-------|
| One Sterling | 1.8150/60 | | |
| One U.S. dollar | 1.2045/50 | | |
| One Canadian dollar | 1.6140/50 | | |
| One Deutsche mark | 1.8195/205 | | |
| One Swiss franc | 1.4705/15 | | |
| One French franc | 33.20/24 | | |
| One Italian lire | 5.4200/50 | | |
| One Japanese yen | 121.6/121.7 | | |
| One Swedish crown | 127.80/90 | | |
| One Norwegian crown | 5.8145/95 | | |
| One Danish crown | 6.2960/3070 | | |
| One ounce of gold | 6.2045/145 | | |
| | \$338.00/338.50 | | |

Hong Kong bank ups bid for Midland

LONDON (R) — HSBC Holdings, owner of the Hong Kong and Shanghai Bank, Tuesday raised its offer for Brito's Midland Bank to £3.9 billion (\$7.15 billion) in a final attempt to beat off rival Lloyds Bank.

The Hong Kong bank had previously offered £3.4 billion (\$6 billion) for Midland in a deal which would create one of the world's top 10 banks.

Lloyds, which has made a conditional rival bid for Midland, said it was now reviewing its position and would make a statement later Tuesday.

An HSBC merger with Midland would give the Hong Kong bank a strong British base ahead of the return of the crown colony to Chinese rule in 1997.

Midland, struggling under the weight of hefty bad debt provisions, could use a capital infusion.

The bank's board recommended its shareholders to accept the raised HSBC offer, adding that a firm bid by Lloyds Bank PLO looked increasingly unlikely. The HSBC offer closes on June 25.

Britain's Monopolies and Mergers Commission (MMC) is studying the Lloyds proposed bid and is likely to take several months. The HSBC holdings offer has already received competition clearance from the European Commission and the Bank of England said it had no objection to it.

"The (HSBC) bid is probably sufficient to win the deal before Lloyds comes back from the Monopolies and Mergers Commission," said Mike Fesemeyer, banking analyst at the Nomura Research Institute.

HSBC's first bid followed the resumption of merger talks in March, ending an icy period in a keenly-watched four-year courtship since late 1987, when the Hong Kong bank bought a 14.9 per cent stake in Midland.

HSBC is now offering 120 HSBC Holdings PLC shares and £65 (\$119.20) in HSBC bonds or cash for every 100 Midland Bank PLC shares, valuing each Midland share at 471 pence (\$8.64).

"It beats the non-bid by Lloyds and I think our shareholders will find it a fair deal," Midland chief executive Brian Pearce said in a telephone interview.

Lloyds' conditional bid would, at Tuesday's share prices, be worth just over £3.8 billion (\$6.97 billion).

HSBC Chairman William Purves said in a statement: "We now look forward to completing the merger as soon as possible so that we can begin to realise the benefits that will flow from a combination of our two banks."

Israeli unemployment soars, cuts immigration drastically

TEL AVIV (R) — Unemployment soared in the first quarter of 1992, helping to push immigration from the former Soviet Union to a record low one month before Israel's general election, figures showed Tuesday.

The Central Bureau of Statistics said joblessness reached 11.5 per cent in the first three months of the year compared with 11 per cent in the fourth quarter of 1991. It was the highest in more than 20 years.

The Jewish Agency, responsible for bringing Jews to Israel, blamed the lack of jobs for a drastic slowdown of immigration, mainly from the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS).

In May only 4,142 immigrants came, the lowest number since the exodus of Jews from CIS countries began in 1990, the agency said. More than 16,000 Jews came to Israel in May 1991.

The opposition Labour Party has used the economy and immigration as weapons in its campaign against Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin's Likud Party for the June 23 election.

"If there is not a real change in the near future in creating employment, we are liable to miss an opportunity for a great wave of immigration from the CIS," Jewish Agency Chairman Simcha Dinitz said.

The government budget forecast unemployment of 12 to 14 per cent in 1992, and 200,000 immigrants. But in the first five months of 1992, only 28,497 have come. Since 1989, 422,803 Jews have moved to Israel, most from the former Soviet Union.

In some development towns, up to 50 per cent of the highly educated and skilled Russian immigrants are jobless.

Egypt eases path for foreign banks

CAIRO (R) — A new law allowing all banks to deal in local currency will boost Egypt's drive to become a modern financial centre and attract foreign banks, local bankers said Tuesday.

The law, which parliament passed Monday, is part of wide-ranging economic reforms aimed at creating a market economy in Egypt and ending decades of socialist-style restrictions.

It will allow foreign bank branches, which have lobbied the government for years, to compete with local and joint venture banks in dealing in Egyptian pounds.

"It's a step towards floating the Egyptian pound," said Khaled Amin, a dealer at the Arab International Bank. "The major business for banks in Egypt now is foreign exchange."

But bankers were still unclear under precisely what conditions they would be allowed to work in local currency.

"We're very pleased the step's been taken ... but I'd like to see the full text (of the law) in English," said Michael Seibel, a senior vice president at Bank of America.

The government suggested a compromise proposal that foreign bank branches should build up a capital base in Egypt after the banks objected to the original proposal that they should become subsidiaries of their parents.

Opening a branch is less time-consuming for parent companies than establishing a separate company.

Foreign banks entered Egypt in strength in the 1970s and early 1980s, when the import-starved economy was booming on petrodollars.

But as their business shrank under the impact of a recession, they were forced to choose between the commitment of forming a joint venture to compete on equal terms with Egyptian banks, or quitting the country altogether.

A handful, including Bank of America, Citibank and Arab Bank, which remained as outright foreign ventures, found themselves even more isolated last year when interest and exchange rates on the Egyptian pound were freed.

The move tured billions of dollars of holdings into a high-yielding Egyptian pound that was holding steady against the dollar.

Bankers said they expected more banks to be attracted to Egypt by the lower barriers to entry, and competition would get tougher.

But the impact of the new law would depend on other liberalisation measures still in the pipeline. A law to revive Egypt's dormant capital markets is expected by the end of the month.

Price of a vodka bottle triples

Yeltsin appeals to delay freeing energy prices

MOSCOW (Agencies) — President Boris Yeltsin appealed to the gas and oil industries Tuesday to delay freeing prices, saying energy price increases would seriously harm the country, news agencies reported.

Agriculture and families who are already suffering under market reforms would suffer if the prices rise, Mr. Yeltsin said in an appeal sent to workers in the two industries.

Expensive oil would lead to higher prices across the board, including higher bread and milk prices, the Interfax and ITAR-TASS news agencies quoted Mr. Yeltsin as saying.

Mr. Yeltsin repeatedly has voiced resistance to the International Monetary Fund's insistence that Russia remove controls on the domestic price of coal, oil and natural gas.

Over the weekend, he fired Russian oil minister Viktor Lopukhin, who favoured freeing energy prices. The president established a new committee to study the issue.

"The government understands that releasing prices for energy and gas must happen, but not immediately, not all at once," Mr. Yeltsin said.

"It would cause serious damage to the country, to all workers. To liberalise prices now would mean to allow a sharp leap in prices," he said.

A sharp drop in extracting oil and gas reserves has already affected the transport, energy and agriculture sectors, forcing them to rely heavily on imports, Mr. Yeltsin said.

However, Mr. Yeltsin sought to assure workers in the two industries that he would be attentive to their demands.

He promised to pay workers who have not received salaries and to give them more independence in running the industries. He also said that a "working document" concerning price liberalisation had been drawn up.

Interfax also reported Tuesday that milk would go up to 17 roubles (less than 15 cents) per litre in Moscow on June 10, quoting Mosmoloko Milk Production Association head Mikhail Nabatnikov. A litre of milk currently costs less than two roubles.

The average Russian salary is less than 2,000 roubles (\$17) monthly, according to the State Committee for Statistics.

Monday, vodka rose from 47 roubles per 15-ounce (500 millilitre) bottle to about 150 roubles. That's an increase of 39 cents to \$1.25, based on the tourist exchange rate.

The new price represents about three days' wages for the average worker.

The government also announced it may soon free prices for bread and milk. And in yet another blow to consumers, Moscow telephone rates tripled overnight.

"When will it ever end?" said metalworker Yuri Vidinin. As he looked longingly at the stalls of the Tverskoy supermarket, Mr. Vidinin tried to recall the last time he had been able to afford potatoes.

"If the prices for bread and milk go up, that's the end. It's an act of sabotage," he said.

Konstantin Kudryatsov, a retired defence ministry worker, blamed Mr. Yeltsin personally for the increases.

"He doesn't worry about the people — he just spits on them," said Mr. Kudryatsov.

When Mr. Yeltsin freed prices for most goods on Jan. 2 as part of his programme to move from a centrally planned to a market economy, vodka was on the list of staple items exempted, along with necessities such as bread, baby food, medicines and milk.

As one of the few items in high demand that was reasonably affordable, vodka, which could be bought legally only with ration coupons, began to disappear from stores after Mr. Yeltsin's decree.

People looking for extra cash waited in line to buy a bottle, then sold it on the street for a higher price. Merchants made under-the-table deals with factory workers to buy cases directly from the plant, then sold them at a profit.

On May 7, the city government announced it would free prices for Russia's national drink — but not so people would drink less, but to prevent black marketing. The move took effect Monday.

"If they had kept the old prices I wouldn't be standing here. I'm letting people insult me just for 10 roubles," said Svetlana Balmokova, 37, as she tried to hawk a bottle of vodka for 150 roubles that she had bought for 139. Reselling goods was the only way to make ends meet, she said.

For many people, wages in the new Russia have failed to keep up with prices. The loss of price subsidies has been especially hard on pensioners, students and the under-employed.

"I wanted to buy vodka, but I don't have enough money so I'll have to settle for a bottle of wine," said Aleksei, an unemployed machinist who stood outside a liquor store in a heavy coat, dirty trousers and slippers.

"If you drink enough vodka, you don't want to eat," said Aleksei, who declined to give his last name.

"Whatever the price, we'll buy it," said a woman in her late 50s as she worked her elbows in a desperate effort to keep her place in a queue at a shop in central Moscow.

"It's more expensive now, so it must taste better," joked her neighbour in the line, a worker in his forties.

Their reaction recalled an old Russian anecdote, seen by many as a sad commentary on traditional attitudes towards vodka.

"Daddy, now that vodka prices have gone up will you drink less?" asks a son.

"No, son, you'll eat less," comes the stern — and realistic — reply.

Recent government figures show annual spirit consumption at about five litres (nine pints) for every man, woman and child. Home-brewed liquor, not included in the figures, is estimated to have topped state production.

Monday, people rushed for the sudden bounty, some spending an average one-month Moscow salary to buy up to 10 bottles at 130 to 140 roubles each. The official exchange rate is 85 roubles to the dollar.

A nearby private shop offered vodka at 150 roubles per bottle — and no queues.

An elderly man explained the apparent lack of interest in this lonely outpost of free market reform: "No one knows what stuff they sell in these private shops."

After freeing prices on most other goods over the past five months, Mr. Yeltsin apparently realised the government was losing hundreds of millions of roubles to the fledgling private sector.

Moscow's pricing chief told ITAR-TASS news agency last month's presidential order to lift price controls on vodka recognised the 10-fold rise in the cost of neutral spirits used to make it.

Prices have been raised by every Soviet leader since Leonid Brezhnev, rising steadily from two roubles 87 kopecks in the 1970s to 10 roubles for half a litre last year. It hit 50 roubles this January.

Despite price increases, political drives against drinking and health campaigns, vodka remains the traditional Russian drink. In many rural areas, where the worth of the rouble is deeply mistrusted, a bottle of vodka is a unit of economic value and often used for payment or barter.

On the financial side, the top two officials of the central bank resigned in a dispute with lawmakers over the cost of loans.

At both the bank and the oil ministry, the Russian government is caught between a commitment to free market reforms, and fear that too rapid change will cause social and political unrest.

"Today, people still support the reforms and the president, but if we go beyond a critical point (of price hikes), we'll set off a general disaster," Mr. Yeltsin said Saturday.

Western lenders and advisers also have urged Russia to unshackle its banking system from stifling state regulations and to foster competitive banking.

But the Russian legislature's Commission on Budget and Finance, reacting to complaints from collective farms and other major borrowers, has demanded that the central bank cut its interest rate on loans to 50 per cent from the current 80 per cent.

Those rates are exorbitant by Western standards, but they are lower than the inflation rate in the former Soviet Union, more than 300 per cent so far this year. That means the central bank effectively is giving away money every time it makes a loan.

The central bank's chairman, Georgy Matyukhin, and his first deputy, Vladimir Rasskazov, submitted their resignations, Monday rather than agree to cut the interest rate.

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UM-UTHAINA

Ceasefire ignored in Sarajevo; Serbia begins to feel sanctions

BELGRADE (AP) — Residents of Sarajevo rushed to cellars early Tuesday as Serb-led forces clashed with Muslim Slavs, making a mockery of yet another ceasefire in Bosnia-Herzegovina.

Serbia, despite the defiance of its president, began to feel the pinch of U.N. sanctions imposed last week over its involvement in the war in neighbouring Bosnia. It said it was halting foreign debt payments.

Artillery shells rained on Sarajevo overnight and early Tuesday from Serb positions overlooking the embattled Bosnian capital. Muslims and Serbs fought on the city's west side.

A U.N.-sponsored ceasefire in Sarajevo, one in a long series ignored in newly independent Bosnia, was to have begun late Monday afternoon.

The United Nations had said it would start talks on reopening Sarajevo airport for relief flights after the ceasefire deadline. But U.N. Col. John Wilson told the BBC in an interview from Sarajevo that the airport could

not function without an effective ceasefire.

Bosnia's government said two Yugoslav warplanes attacked the area around the central Bosnian town of Tuzla Monday. Details were unavailable.

Since Bosnia's majority Muslims and ethnic Croats voted overwhelmingly for independence on Feb. 29, more than 2,200 people have been killed in fighting between them and Serb irregulars backed by the Serb-dominated Yugoslav army.

Serbs have seized about two-thirds of Bosnia in the fighting. The United Nations and most of the world blame Serbia and its small ally Montenegro for the war. The world body imposed tough sanctions Saturday on the two states, which formed the new truncated Yugoslavia after Bosnia, Slovenia, Croatia and Macedonia each broke away.

But Serbian President Slobodan Milosevic, the dominant politician in Yugoslavia, spoke defiantly nonetheless.

Milosevic told Belgrade Radio that parliamentary elections Sunday represented a victory over enemies at home and abroad. The opposition boycotted the elections and international observers disregarded them.

The only candidates were from Mr. Milosevic's Socialist Party — former Communist — and allied ultra-nationalist and Communist groups.

In Montenegro, Communists won overwhelmingly, initial results showed.

In Belgrade, drivers lined up their cars for kilometres overnight to wait for gasoline. Gas prices rose 100 per cent at midnight.

The Politika daily, considered close to Mr. Milosevic's government, said Yugoslavia will stop repaying its estimated \$8 billion foreign debt because of the sanctions.

Politika said Yugoslavia has the resources to survive for 18 months. The sanctions ban trade, freeze of Yugoslavia's foreign

assets and impose an oil embargo.

At the United Nations in New York, Bosnia's U.N. envoy told a news conference Monday that the world must act swiftly to deliver humanitarian aid.

"It is unrealistic to expect those huddled in bunkers and running out of food and water in Bosnia to wait until the Serbians and Montenegrins run out of gasoline," Ambassador Mohammad Sacirbey said.

Belgrade residents, long accustomed to the highest quality of life in the days of Communist Europe, faced sanctions boldly. "These so-called sanctions will not have any effect," said Milos Djukic, an economist who was sitting in one of the many jammed cafes on Belgrade's Knez Mihajlova pedestrian mall.

"It could get bad eventually, but we lived through worse during World War II and we survived," said retired nurse Aleksandra Juric. "We are a very adaptable people."



Serbian irregulars open fire with machine-guns on Muslim positions in the battle for Sarajevo

Ramos wins in Philippines with 23.5% of vote

MANILA (R) — Former defence chief Fidel Ramos has clinched the Philippine presidential election with 23.5 per cent of the vote, according to near-complete returns released Tuesday by his staff.

The Philippine Congress still has to officially announce the winner, but returns received by the watchdog Commission on Election (COMELEC) and released to the press by Gen. Ramos staff showed him with an unbeatable total of 5.24 million votes.

A senior Philippine official said he was confident Congress would soon proclaim former defence chief Fidel Ramos as new president and no group could stop it.

"Stability is very crucial to economic development... We assure everybody that there will be a smooth transition to the next government," President Corason Aquino's Executive Secretary, Franklin Drilon, said in a television interview.

The Manila Chronicle newspaper, quoting police sources, said Tuesday police had uncovered a plot to kill Gen. Ramos. It said the unnamed plotters had picked a Muslim bandit operating on the southern island of Mindanao to carry out the job.

"I have been under that kind of threat or pressure for a long, long time," the newspaper quoted Gen. Ramos as saying. "I will not say that I relish these things but I can also say... I'm fairly well prepared against this to protect myself."

Gen. Ramos has claimed victory in the May 11 polls on the basis of unofficial results announced by the Media Citizens Quick Count.

The lumbering official count by the congress, which will proclaim the winner, has anti-graft crusader Miriam Santiago in the lead so far with 445,767 votes followed by businessman Eduardo Cojuangco with 401,932 and Gen. Ramos with 330,251.

Reuters from Gen. Ramos's political stronghold, which his party says should push him to the top, are still unaccounted for in the congressional tally.

Santiago has accused Gen. Ramos of vote-padding and threatened to launch nationwide protests against the alleged fraud.

The legislature must proclaim a winner by June 30, when Mrs. Aquino steps down after a six-year term. Failure to name a winner by then could spark a constitutional crisis and prompt an army takeover, politicians have warned.

WORLD NEWS IN BRIEF

10 killed in Detroit fire

DETROIT (AP) — A smoky fire roared through a boarding house early Tuesday, killing 10 people and seriously injuring two others, authorities said. The blaze broke out around 2:30 a.m. (0630 GMT) and gutted the three-story brick building. Sixteen people were believed to have been inside the house, called New Wave Development. Fire Chief Harold Watkins said. He said four of them escaped without injury and two others, a man and a woman, were in serious condition. The 10 other residents were found dead inside, chief Watkins said. Many of the residents were physically or mentally handicapped, authorities said.

Indian police kill Sikh militant

CHANDIGARH, India (R) — Indian paramilitary forces Tuesday shot dead a Sikh militant accused of 200 killings including the beheading of a radio official in the northern Punjab state week, police said. They said Amrik Singh Kauri, a local chief of the Babbar Khalsa International Militant Group was gunned down in an encounter in Chandigarh, capital of Punjab. Chandigarh Police Chief Rahde Shyam Gupta said Kauri, 25, was wanted for the some 200 killings during the last three years, including the murder last week of employees of state-run All India Radio (AIR). The headless body of Mohan Lal Manchanda, air station supervisor in the Punjab city of Patiala, was found early last Wednesday, the day after a deadline to implement a series of militant demands in return for his release expired.

Mrs. Mandela loses another ANC post

JOHANNESBURG (R) — The African National Congress (ANC) has dealt another blow to Winnie Mandela's troubled political career by suspending her from the leadership of its Women's League. The League said the veteran South African activist had been suspended from its National Executive Committee for organising a protest by supporters to demand her reinstatement as head of the black opposition movement's Social Welfare Department. "A demonstration against the ANC by its own members is tantamount to a mutiny in military terms," the committee said in a statement Monday evening. "The ANC has procedures and structures through which complaints and grievances can be raised."

Fujimori calls elections

LIMA (R) — President Alberto Fujimori has called elections for an 80-member constituent Congress, saying it would pave the way for a return to "full democracy" in Peru. Mr. Fujimori, in a televised address Monday night nearly two months after he seized sweeping powers, also said he would hold a referendum on reforms proposed by the constituent Congress. "The elections for a constituent democratic Congress will be held Sunday, Oct. 18, and the product of its work, the proposed constitution, will be submitted to a popular consultation," he said.

Rabuka sworn in as Fiji premier

SUVA, Fiji (R) — Former coup leader Sitiveni Rabuka, sworn in as Fiji's new prime minister Tuesday, has agreed to review the country's racially-biased constitution which brought him to political supremacy. Gen. Rabuka, who overthrew Fiji's Indian-dominated government in 1987, Tuesday made a deal with the same Indian politicians to review the constitution in return for their support for his prime ministerial candidacy. "We admit that there aspects of the constitution that can be changed and improved upon for the good of all communities in Fiji...." Gen. Rabuka said at his first official press conference.

4 more dead on Mount McKinley

TALKEETNA, Alaska (AP) — A ranger watched through binoculars as four climbers on Mount McKinley slipped and fell 3,000 feet (900 metres) to their deaths, officials said. The accident brought the mountain's death toll this year to 11. The climbers were roped together for safety Sunday when they fell from 19,000 feet (5,800 metres), said John Quinley, a National Park Service spokesman. Rangers found the bodies at 16,000 feet (5,000 metres). All four climbers were from Quebec, Canada, but their names were not immediately released pending notification of their relatives.

Key European arms treaty likely to be delayed again

BRUSSELS (R) — A key arms treaty that provides for deep cuts in military hardware across Europe is almost certain to be delayed again because some NATO allies and former Soviet republics have not ratified it, diplomats said.

The collapse of the Soviet Union had already delayed implementation of the Conventional Forces in Europe (CFE) treaty, signed more than 18 months ago by all members of NATO and the now-defunct Warsaw Pact.

Eight former Soviet republics told NATO last week they had finally agreed how to split up the military might limited by the treaty, following concerted pressure from the West.

NATO allies and their former foes are due to sign a protocol giving their blessing to that new agreement at a meeting in Oslo Friday, opening the way for cuts in tanks, armoured vehicles, artil-

lery pieces and aircraft from the Atlantic to the Urals. But diplomats and officials said Monday most of the parliaments in former Soviet republics 'could not be able to meet a planned July deadline for ratifying the treaty so that it could come into force.

In addition, they said, a few NATO members had not ratified the pact. In most cases, this was for technical reasons but NATO ally Turkey is worried that the treaty might allow republics in troubled Transcaucasia like Azerbaijan and Armenia to avoid some limits on armoured vehicles.

The parliament in Ankara, worried about regional conflicts on Turkey's borders, has not yet ratified the treaty. The Turks have told their allies that former Soviet republics in the Transcaucasia will have to ratify CFE first, sources said.

Russia orders resumption of its nuclear programme

MOSCOW (Agencies) — Russia has ordered the resumption of its nuclear energy programme, effectively halting after the 1986 Chernobyl disaster, the world's worst nuclear accident, a government official said Tuesday.

Yuri Rogozhin, an official with the State Nuclear Energy Safety Agency, confirmed a report published by Komsomolskaya Pravda newspaper.

"I agree that our nuclear energy industry is ill as is the whole of the country's economy. But it should be treated. You do not cut off a head when it is aching," he said.

Komsomolskaya Pravda said First Deputy Prime Minister Yegor Gaidar had signed the order on March 26 to resume construction of a number of new nuclear plants and to increase the capacity of existing ones.

The document, not yet made public, granted considerable privileges to regions where construction of the nuclear stations was being renewed. This might head off public protests, but Komsomolskaya Pravda predicted an angry reaction from environmental groups abroad.

In a separate development, Russia has postponed the pullout of former Soviet troops from the troubled republics of Armenia, Azerbaijan and Georgia, the Defence Ministry said Monday.

"We are there because without us, people will start killing each other," Russian Defence Minister Pavel Grachev said in an interview published Monday in the daily newspaper Izvestia.

Mr. Grachev announced last month that former Soviet troops would begin withdrawing on June

1 from three republics, where ethnic and political disputes have flared since the Soviet Union's collapse in December.

Army Cmdr. Fyodor Reut said Monday that some units of the former Soviet 7th army are scheduled to begin leaving Armenia in 10 to 15 days, the ITAR-TASS News Agency reported.

No new dates were announced for the troop withdrawal from the other Caucasus mountain states.

A four-year war between Armenia and Azerbaijan over Nagorno-Karabakh, an Armenian enclave within Azerbaijan, has left more than 1,500 people dead. In Georgia, hundreds have died in South Ossetia's battle to separate from the republic and unite with neighbouring North Ossetia in Russia.

In the interview, Mr. Grachev indicated he was delaying the removal of troops from Georgia and Armenia at the request of those newly independent governments. He did not say whether Azerbaijan asked for the troops to stay.

"We do not intend to keep our troops there while they're daily submitted to danger and humiliation and where they are looked upon as occupiers," Mr. Grachev said.

In the latest violence, a truck carrying humanitarian aid from Britain was destroyed by a land mine Monday near the village of Kichan in Nagorno-Karabakh, Armenian officials said. ITAR-TASS said one person died.

There were an undetermined number of casualties in village of Martuni, which was shelled by Azerbaijani forces, ITAR-TASS said.

Sri Lankan army reports 28 killed in ethnic war

COLOMBO, Sri Lanka (AP) — Government troops backed by tanks and aircraft fought their way to a northeastern town, killing at least 21 Tamil Tigers, the military said Tuesday.

Seven soldiers were killed and 27 wounded in the attack Monday in Ampil in Mullaitivu district, about 270 kilometres northeast of

Colombo, said officials at the military headquarters.

The military estimated 75 rebels were killed in the fighting, raising to 345 the number of Tigers believed dead in the six-day-old operations. "The rebels' bodies could not be accounted for because the Tigers carried them away."

Environmentalists slam Bush proposal to help save forests

WASHINGTON (Agencies) — George Bush claims the United States is going to the Earth Summit as the world's environmental leader. But his critics claim he has become "the hypocritical president" when it comes to the environment.

Mr. Bush announced Monday that the United States would put an extra \$150 million in the pot to help save the world's forests, promoting environmental groups to launch a barrage of criticism at the man who says he wants to be known as the environmental president.

The president's attempt to help the Third World fight deforestation "is like the Yugoslavs sending a peacekeeping force to the Middle East," said Nathaniel Lawrence of the Natural Resources Defence Council.

Mr. Bush travelled to the Goddard Space Flight Centre in Greenbelt, Maryland, to make his announcement in front of a huge photograph of Earth taken by astronauts returning from the moon. He applauded workers for their role in managing satellites that monitor the environment.

The president, trying to polish his environmental record for the 100-nation summit opening this week in Rio De Janeiro, offered the added \$150 million and challenged other countries to double their conservation budgets and to double the amount available to

poorer countries for forestation efforts to \$2.7 billion a year.

Mr. Bush said the U.S. will go to Rio "proudly as the world's leader not just in environmental research, but in environmental action."

He said he invited co-chairman of the record that the nation and his administration have built. It was not long in coming.

"Bush has broken his promises on practically every environment issue that concerns every man, woman and child," the Sierra Club said.

Bill Clinton, Mr. Bush's Democratic challenger for the presidency, said Mr. Bush went along with a gutted global warming treaty "because the people who control the Bush administration's policies did not want to reinvest in our environment."

Meanwhile on the eve of the world's biggest meeting on the environment, rich and poor nations clashed over key treaties and diplomats fretted over whether the event would end in triumph or tragedy.

The two-week United Nations Conference on the Environment and Development (UNCED), starting Wednesday, will bring together around 100 heads of state or government to find ways of boosting growth without wrecking the planet. Billed as a new chance for

North and South to come together after the cold war, diplomats say the Rio meeting could turn instead into a new battleground over controversial issues such as debt, trade, forest exploitation and the price of economic progress.

As delegations prepared for the pre-summit skirmishing Tuesday, the United States was taking most of the flak. Washington announced last Friday it would not sign one of the meeting's main treaties, a "biodiversity" agreement to protect endangered species and share the riches from new products developed from nature.

Delegations from the European Community (EC) to Brazil condemned the move, though it later became clear other leading nations including Britain and Japan also had serious reservations.

Diplomats said a drafting lapse during preparatory talks in Nairobi had produced a document that could be interpreted as giving convention authorities the right to dictate how much money individual countries should pay to finance the agreement.

An announcement that Washington would instead set aside tens of millions of dollars a year to help preserve the world's forests did not impress some disappointed delegates.

Marco Azambuja, chief negotiator for host-nation Brazil, said the U.S. forest money was a unilateral gesture which was out of tune with the Earth Summit's planet-wide agreements.

"There is no linkage between not signing the biodiversity agreement and giving \$100 million for forests," he said. "One doesn't rescue the other."

Botswana's delegation head Seiso David Liphuko said: "The U.S. itself contributes greatly to the sort of problem we are facing."

The environmental group Greenpeace described the U.S. forest money as a "cynical move to mask Washington's attempts to sabotage the Earth Summit."

A spokesman for the U.S. delegation, which has shunned the U.N. conference centre in favour of plush facilities at Rio's Sheraton Hotel, said no one was available to comment.

Politicians in Rio cautioned against reading too much into the pre-summit manoeuvring, saying that some nations liked to adopt a tough stance in public, only to fall happily into line during subsequent closed negotiations.

The only firm agreement announced was a new \$300 million loan to Brazil from the Export-Import Bank of Japan. Part of the money will be used to finance anti-pollution projects in Brazilian industry.

Japanese delegation spokesman Sadakazu Numata said Tokyo felt its experience in coping with environmental problems caused by rapid development was useful to other nations.

"We have learned that environmental protection and economic growth are compatible," he said in an interview.

"If you pursue growth single-mindedly you pay for it very heavily."

In a separate development, Pele, the legendary "king of soccer," Monday told slam children that this week's Earth Summit will lead to a better world.

Pele, whose football genius propelled him from poverty to riches, was speaking to players in a soccer tournament between teams made up of children from slums in Kenya and Brazil.

"(The Earth Summit) marks the kickoff to a better world, a better life," Pele said at the tournament's opening ceremony.

Earth Summit organisers have appointed Pele a special ambassador for the meeting, which will bring together about 100 heads of state in Rio De Janeiro over the next two weeks to study ways of avoiding environmental disaster. "Ten per cent of the (world's) population lives well, and 90 per cent live badly. We have to start thinking about people because without people, we cannot have ecology," he said.

COLUMN

Princess Stephanie admits she is pregnant

LONDON (R) — Princess Stephanie of Monaco says she is pregnant by a former royal bodyguard but is in no rush to marry her lover, Hello magazine said. The 27-year-old princess said in an interview with the glossy personality magazine that her family was "very happy" about her child, due to be born in November. Palace officials in Monaco have declined to confirm or deny reports of impending motherhood for the onetime model and pop singer. The princess is pictured in the magazine kissing and cuddling with boyfriend Daniel Dacruet, an ex-bodyguard to the Monaco royal family with whom she has lived for a year. They say they are thrilled about becoming parents and are convinced the child will be a boy, to be named Jonathan. Princess Stephanie was quoted as saying she wanted to marry Mr. Dacruet but not just yet, and the eventual ceremony would be a small, private affair rather than an extravagant royal wedding. Princess Stephanie is the youngest of the three children of Prince Rainier and his late wife, former American film actress Grace Kelly.

Clever monkey inspires Chinese baby boom

PEKING (R) — China, already unable to support its 1.14 billion people, is in the throes of a baby boom fuelled by superstition that 1992, the Year of the Monkey, is an auspicious year to give birth, a scholar warned. "China's population has surpassed the supportable level in terms of natural resources available, the environment and economic development," State Council research fellow Gao Zhengang said in an article in the official China Daily. The ideal population which China can sustain is 700 million people, Mr. Gao said. "The world's most populous country is growing by 16 million people a year." "The population problem will get more serious in 1992, unless the family planning policy is implemented more efficiently." "With a new baby boom underway, the 1990s are believed to be the last chance the country has to control the population," Mr. Gao said. Many Chinese believe 1992 to be auspicious for having children because the monkey is one of the cleverest animals symbolising each year of the 12-year Chinese calendar. In contrast, 1991 — the Year of the Sheep — was thought to be unlucky.

'Sham' doctor prescribed shampoo cure

LEEDS, England (R) — A man alleged to have practised as a doctor for 30 years without any qualifications prescribed mouthfuls of shampoo, a British court heard. Pharmacist Martin Spicer said the accused, Muhammad Saeed, also told some patients to rub cough medicine on their skin and to take tablets by the spoonful. "If one five millilitre of hair shampoo is to be taken three times a day, you tend to think something is wrong," said Mr. Spicer. He told a court in Leeds, northern England, that he noted serious errors in more than 250 prescriptions written by Mr. Saeed over a six-month period. Mr. Saeed, 64, denies charges of obtaining money by false pretences and property by deception. The case continues.

Van Gogh thief gets 4-year jail term

AMSTERDAM (R) — A court has sentenced a man to four years jail for stealing three early works by Dutch painter Vincent Van Gogh among the most prized artists in the world market. Jozef De Mul, a 37-year-old Dutchman, was convicted of theft from the North Brabant Museum in the southern town of Den Bosch in June 1990. One of the paintings was later found in a bank safe deposit box in Belgium but the other two are still missing. Mr. De Mul's wife was acquitted last week of trying to sell the stolen works. A third suspect will stand trial later this month. Earlier this year four men were sentenced to jail terms of six and seven years for stealing 20 Van Gogh paintings worth \$500 million from the Van Gogh Museum in Amsterdam in 1991. That was the biggest art theft since World War II, but also one of the most short-lived as all of the paintings were recovered by police just a few hours later.